



JOURNEYS

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / SPRING 2016

Celebrating 2,000-Milers

Widening the Scale
of Trail Protection

Hammocking

Mt. Moosilauke
4802 ft.



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The Appalachian Trail Conservancy's mission is to preserve and manage the Appalachian Trail — ensuring that its vast natural beauty and priceless cultural heritage can be shared and enjoyed today, tomorrow, and for centuries to come.

JOURNEYS

THE MAGAZINE OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY / SPRING 2016

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ON THE COVER
2015 flip-flop thru-hiker Norma "Dropknife" Minar snaps a selfie on Mount Moosilauke in New Hampshire while "having a good time even without any views." She is from Munich, Germany.

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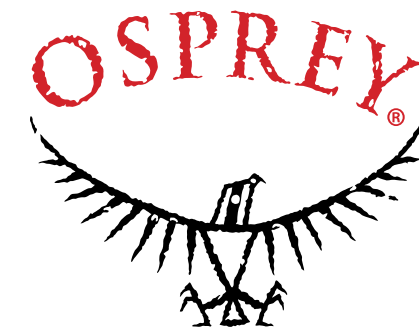
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The A.T. in 2016

I AM WRITING THIS COLUMN AS

I look out my window at home at what will likely be the last snow of the season for our neighborhood. It is March and several thousand aspiring A.T. thru-hikers will make the pilgrimage to Springer Mountain over the next couple of months to begin a nearly 2,200-mile trek from Georgia toward Katahdin. From past experience, we know only a fraction of them (perhaps 25 percent) will complete the entire Trail this year.

At the same time there will be many other A.T. hikers in north Georgia up to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. These include day hikers, overnight campers, and in the Georgia section of the Trail, an ever increasing number of students backpacking during college spring break. It is a serious challenge for the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and our federal and volunteer partners to manage the increased popularity of the world's most famous long-distance hiking trail.

The ATC and its partners have developed a thoughtful and detailed approach to this challenge, with special emphasis on the north Georgia section of the A.T. This new initiative builds on decades of managing growing use of the Trail. We have named this program "Protecting the A.T. Hiking Experience" (PATHE). For Georgia, it includes the following strategies for 2016:

- A full-scale voluntary thru-hiker registration system, which has been available since December, to all aspiring thru-hikers
- An increase to five in the number of on-Trail ridge runners to interact with hikers in Georgia (There was only one ridge runner as of several years ago for this section of the A.T.)
- A large number of new campsites near Hawk Mountain Shelter — the first major camping area on the Trail for northbound thru-hikers
- Additional law enforcement presence for the A.T. by the Forest Service

At the other end of the Trail, Baxter State Park recently announced a new A.T. hiker registration system for 2016. The park now requires any long-distance A.T. hikers, except for those who are southbound, to pick up a registration card and have it in their possession as they summit Katahdin. There is no fee for the card and no limit on the number of cards distributed to A.T. hikers.

It is certainly a sign of the times that Baxter has adopted this new hiker registration requirement. Since 2012, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has required a permit and a \$20 fee to hike the Trail across the 70-plus miles within the park, and Shenandoah National Park also has a permit requirement for any overnight hiker. All of these rules are a result of the growing popularity of the Appalachian Trail.

The ATC works collaboratively with national parks, national forests, national wildlife refuges, state parks, and many other state and local jurisdictions to protect Trail values and to assure a high quality hiking experience. We would prefer not to have permit and registration systems for any section of the A.T. The best alternative to even more rules and regulations is for Trail hikers to follow Leave No Trace principles; to accept and follow existing restrictions on group size, use of shelters and campsites, and to treat fellow hikers with respect.

Hiking the A.T. continues to be a special experience that is being enjoyed by larger numbers of people. Let's all work together to protect that experience for the next generation. 📌

Ronald J. Tipton / Executive Director - CEO



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2,000-milers "Seeker," "Hip," "Moment," and "Salmon" on Max Patch, North Carolina/Tennessee

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2,000-MILERS

Whether northbound, southbound, "flip-flop," or by section, 1,051 hikers reported their completion of the A.T. this past year.

12 / THE SWING OF IT

As hammock camping becomes more popular, one seasoned A.T. hiker and Leave No Trace advocate explains the pros and cons and do's and don'ts for hammocking on the Trail.

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In the past year, tangible results to the ATC's five-year Strategic Plan demonstrate that the plan is working.

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One of the primary goals for the National Park Service Centennial is to connect with, and create, the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates.

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The next phase of preserving the A.T. experience includes taking a bird's-eye view of the footpath to conserve and protect the iconic landscapes that the Trail traverses.

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Long-distance Hiker Permits in Baxter State Park; 14 State Challenge; Stewardship 101

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Greg Winchester has the heart of a Boy Scout, a professional background in finance and conservation, and an infectious love for the Trail.

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A love affair with the Trail is transferred through three generations of women.

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After 20 years of operating Kincora Hiking Hostel and 15 years of overseeing the Hard Core Trail Crew, Bob Peoples looks to the future of the A.T.

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VIRGINIA CRAFT, A.T. PENNSYLVANIA BY DAVID HALTERMAN



YOU CAN IN FACT “JUDGE A BOOK by its cover” if you have the kind of fine arts cover that you had in the latest edition (*A.T. Journeys* Winter 2016). The watercolor painting by Katie Eberts is very well done. I had mine framed and it's on the wall. I hope to see some more fine art covers in the future.

Frank Moulds
SMITHVILLE, TENNESSEE

THROUGHOUT ALL MY HIKES I enjoyed the beauty and solitude of the wilderness and its wildlife, the glimpses of Americana in Trail towns, and the supportive and endlessly fascinating Trail culture. I was consistently amazed by the bounty of Trail magic we encountered from total strangers with open hearts, the devotion of volunteers to Trail maintenance, and learned that I was mentally and physically capable of more than I'd ever imagined. I mostly met fascinating, selfless hikers who were hiking to learn about themselves and nature, but also a few entitled partyers who saw the Trail as a way to avoid society's rules and commitments. This tiny minority of “bad apples” have been lately having a greater negative impact, trashing hostels and souring attitudes toward hikers. However, I am confident that the A.T. and its greater, positive, community of conservationists will survive and continue to preserve wilderness for future generations' life-changing experiences. Thank you for all you do and for making these experiences

possible! I am proud to be an ATC member and look forward to supporting the ATC all my life.

Christina “Coconut” Schubert
UTICA, NEW YORK

REAL TRAIL MAGIC (“TRAIL MAGIC,” Winter 2016). Many moons ago, my son Jim and I were approaching the shelter on Mount Rogers from the south in the late afternoon when a hiker passed us. When we arrived at the shelter he was being helped with his dinner by another hiker because he had injured his hand. Turned out he had torn the flesh between his index finger and thumb on the barbed wire of a stile. His bandage was makeshift at best. The next morning, as breakfast was being prepared, three hikers appeared from the shelter loft who had retired for the night before our arrival the previous evening. The first of the trio asked to see the wounded hand, examined it, advised a change in bandage placement for better healing and told the injured hiker that he would be OK. [When] the injured hiker then asked where he got his expertise, he explained that he was a hand surgeon from Nashville. The second of the three

f When my daughter was nine years old I began backpacking short sections of the A.T. with a group of women. That first year I took her along, unsure if I was asking too much of her. Turned out, she ran circles around us. Sometimes literally. Each summer we'd do another three- to four-day section. Along the way she began meeting thru-hikers and at some point decided she wanted to thru-hike before she finished high school. It took a lot of thought and planning, but in 2008 she and I backpacked from April to October, almost finishing the A.T. Bad weather in the north kept us

from getting it all. But when we finished our last mile she smacked the final blaze, looked at me and said, “I want my passport.” She has been traveling ever since. My advice: get out there with them. I knew nothing about backpacking when we started; I just got out there and learned along with her. Even if it's just a day hike, walk in the woods with them. Tammy Sizemore

f Thank you; let's hope the ATC's concerted effort to educate this year's A.T. hikers pays off especially at its Baxter State Park terminus. (Ultimately all of us who use the

was also a doctor. Off the trio went leaving behind real expert medical advice. The surgeon had appeared out of the blue in the middle of nowhere to dispense real Trail magic.

J.R. “3RS” McDermott
ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA

THE ATC'S LATEST A.T. JOURNEYS edition deserves a much-needed response. In our constantly evolving “progressive” society, the ATC has chosen to incorporate “government speak” into the editorial and feature article pages of our magazine. I do believe your affirmative action plan for the Appalachian Trail comes right out of the pages of the government agencies you are partnered up with. Perhaps we also need to discourage male thru-hikers in an effort to equalize the ratio of male/females completing the Trail; or station a “diversity officer” at Neel's Gap and Harpers Ferry to enforce arbitrary racial, gender, and ethnic quotas. I suggest you devote considerably less space to pushing left wing political agendas and concentrate on the Trail that we all love and support.

Kevin P. Cannon
PORT SAINT LUCIE, FLORIDA

Trail are responsible for improving the quality of the experience). Priscilla Giroux

f Now that I'm far beyond the time of life when I can go hiking, I highly recommend to everyone who still can hike to DO IT! There are so many intriguing places to see that can only be seen by hiking there. Margaret Swaim

f [The relocated section of A.T. near Pearisburg] is AWESOME! A couple years ago, this was the scariest part of the Trail — happy to hear that the two road crossings are gone! Julia Hix



EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S RESPONSE:

We want *A.T. Journeys* to be a forum for a wide range of views on Trail issues. That being said, it is simply incorrect to characterize the ATC's interest in attracting a broader segment of our population to the A.T. experience as an “affirmative action” program. We are not seeking “racial/ethnic quotas;” and this is by no means a “left wing political agenda.” We are attempting to reach out to an audience of existing and potential A.T. hikers to encourage them to enjoy the Trail experience and become part of a growing A.T. constituency, which is an important initiative within our five-year Strategic Plan. [A](#)

CORRECTION: In the feature article “A Run in the Woods” (Winter 2016), Richard Innes was incorrectly described as “deeply involved in the World War II development of radar.” Mr. Innes explains that he was, in fact, “involved with radar several decades later during the Cold War era in a U.S. Department of Defense.

A.T. Journeys welcomes your comments.

The editors are committed to providing balanced and objective perspectives. Not all letters received may be published. Letters may be edited for clarity and length.



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A

AS I'M WRITING THIS I AM surrounded by boxes and movers as my husband Chris and I begin our next adventure. For those of you who have been keeping up with my columns, you know that my life has been in transition for the past year. Retirement, winter escapes, living at the Blackburn Trail Center — all have been woven into my thoughts about the Appalachian Trail Conservancy and the Appalachian Trail. Now we are selling



our home and I am leaving the hustle and bustle of the Washington, D.C. area after 33 years. Change can be good and exciting, but also scary and stressful, and sometimes sad.

I was feeling the latter emotions the other day when Chris and I took a careful of supplies to Blackburn for a second season of caretaking. While I was looking forward to once again hosting hikers at the center, my day-to-day efforts were keeping my anticipation at bay. So after unloading the car I took off for a brief hike to the A.T. and the Blackburn view, which is a rock outcropping that looks to the west over the Shenandoah Valley. Zoom in on that view and you can see Charlestown, West Virginia and the Shenandoah River. Signal Knob is visible

to the south and in the distance is Great North Mountain. The rock outcropping itself was part of a key land acquisition made in the 1980s as we worked to permanently protect the Trail through the Northern Virginia corridor.

As I sat there, the noises in my head dissipated and I listened to the sounds of the forest. Chirps and wing flaps of birds, buzzing of early insects. Dew still hung from the branches of trees too high up the mountain to have buds yet, though there were crocus blooming along the access trail. Once again the Appalachian Trail was working its magic.

This issue of *A.T. Journeys* includes a piece on the rising popularity of hammock camping on the Trail. As I sat on the rocks I thought that sometimes we need to string our mind between a couple trees and just let it gently sway in the breeze. On the Trail there are no bigger changes than the view from one step to the next. The A.T. allows us a chance to breathe and do nothing but be in the moment — for a minute or two, or as our 2015 2,000-milers know, for weeks or months on end.

The day-to-day world was of course ready and waiting for my return. More boxes were packed, columns were written (only a smidge past deadline), and conference calls were scheduled for the business of managing and protecting this priceless resource. Change, both personal and for the ATC, will continue apace. Some changes will be met positively — others may be disconcerting as we leave behind old ways and face new and unknown futures. But through it all we know that we need only to step on the Appalachian Trail and we can find our peace. 🌱

Sandra Mara / Chair

Spring on the A.T. near Blackburn Trail Center

PHOTO BY LAURIE POTTEIGER

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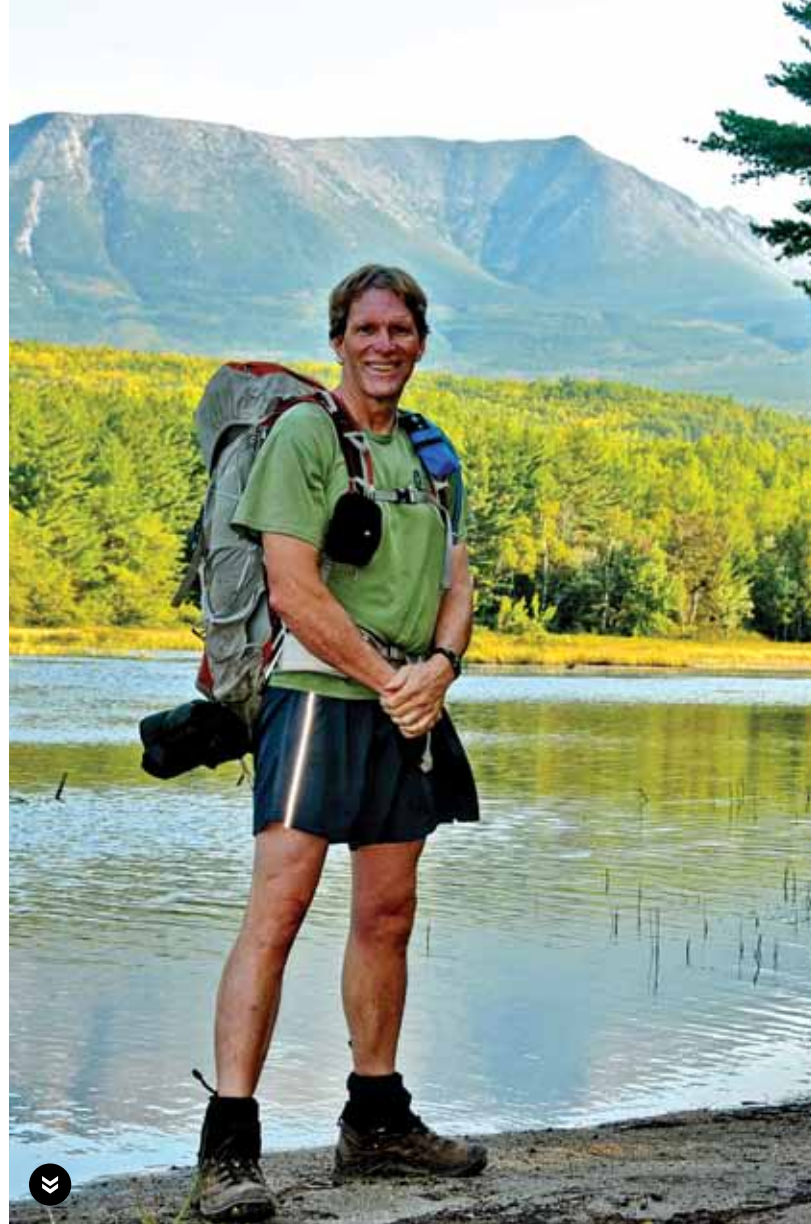
A photograph of a hammock with a tarp shelter set up in a forest. The hammock is suspended between two trees, and the tarp is pitched over it. The forest floor is covered in green plants and brown leaves. The background is a dense forest of tall trees.

The Swing of It

Hammock camping is dramatically expanding along the A.T. and raising both questions and concerns among Trail land managers, club members, and backpackers. Are hammocks really that comfortable and viable as a long-term Trail shelter? Do hammocks pose a threat or a benefit with respect to minimizing camping impacts? Should we be concerned about damage to trees in frequently-visited sites? Do hammock users create or resolve problems at over-crowded shelters and camping areas along the A.T.? »

BY JEFFREY L. MARION

The author in Baxter State Park last spring, during the final section of his 43-year section-hike of the Trail.



BACKPACKING

PHOTO BY H. DEAN CLARK

the A.T. has certainly changed since 1955 when Grandma Gatewood completed the Trail wearing sneakers and carrying a homemade denim sack slung over her shoulder. The Trail has seen tremendous growth in use and substantial changes in the types of gear used. The heavy, external-frame packs that I carried in high school have given way to the lightweight, interior frame packs that I carry today. While Grandma Gatewood used a plastic shower curtain as a shelter, I've used double and single-walled tents, a tarp, a bivy sack, and a hammock.

I began section-hiking the A.T. in 1972 in ninth grade and summited Katahdin last fall after 43 years and 24 section-hikes. I've been using a hammock for the last dozen years. Hammocks offer some unique advantages over tents, with one main challenge, which I'll explain. Also, as a scientist who studies camping impacts in the National Parks and along the A.T., I've assisted in developing sustainable camping management and Leave No Trace practices. While hammock camping impacts have not yet been formally investigated, I have been observing the im-

pacts from my hammock camping and experimenting with low-impact practices. I would like to describe the many advantages that hammocks offer campers, allay some of the concerns I've heard, and include some comprehensive low-impact hammock use practices that will truly allow you to "Leave No Trace" of your visits.

MY JOURNEY TO HAMMOCK CAMPING

My first exposure to a hammock occurred on a canoe trip on Kentucky's Green River around 1970. I was on a Boy Scout outing with my dad and we set up a tarp pulled over our canoe on an island. Several of the older boys were permitted to set up their army surplus jungle hammocks on a separate, smaller island about 60 feet away. That night it rained hard and the river rose steadily. My dad and I were forced to get up and move our canoe and tarp to higher ground around 1 a.m., but with water again lapping at our feet by 4 a.m. we were forced to sleep inside the canoe with our tarp draped overhead. Aluminum canoe ribs and a wet sleeping bag allowed little sleep. At daybreak, I peered across the river to discover that the small island was underwater, with four hammocks suspended less than a foot above the floodwaters. The older boys had been forced to move their ropes further up the trees during the night, and tie off their canoes, but they had remained warm, dry, and comfortable. I've been fascinated by hammocks ever since.

ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF HAMMOCK CAMPING



In 2003, I began using an ultralight backpacking hammock, which is uniquely designed for camping. For me, camping hammocks provide numerous advantages over the other forms of shelter. My hammock weighs 2.4 pounds, lighter than many one-person tents, and has integrated zipper-accessed bug netting. A separate silicone-treated nylon rainfly can be attached to the hammock lines, to the trees, or removed. My hammock came with a pair of wide webbing straps to protect tree bark.

For me, a chief advantage of hammocks over tents is that I always stay dry — top and bottom. On one of my A.T. section-hikes through Pennsylvania, the remnants of a hurricane passed over me one night. Warned of its approach, I had picked out a younger grove of trees to camp in, with no dead trees or limbs nearby. The wind rocked me to sleep with earplugs to dampen the noise. A predicted rainfall of four inches fell that night, with the ground pooling water beneath my hammock, but not a drop reached me. Even better, you never have condensation problems with a hammock. Any raindrops on the fly in the morning can be quickly removed by shaking it — and you never have to pack heavy, wet fabrics with rain-splashed dirt or clinging mud. And there are quite a few other advantages:

- Sleeping in a hammock is comfortable. By orienting your body at a slight diagonal to the hammock's hang, you sleep ergonomically flat, which easily accommodates both side and back sleepers.
- By floating above the ground you avoid sloping terrain, rocks, roots, or muddy soil that inevitably trouble ground sleepers.
- In the summertime, it's airy and cool and you save the weight and bulk of a sleeping pad.
- You can see the stars on clear nights and the hammock makes a great chair or couch for reading and studying maps for the next day's hike.
- My hammock has an overhead internal ridgeline with a mesh bag for storing small items. I use the ridgeline to hang my bathroom bag, headlamp, damp socks, and a bottle of water.
- You can enter and exit a hammock easily during a rainstorm, and even eat a meal and pack up under the rainfly.
- I use "snakeskin" hammock covers that slide over the hammock from each end for transport and storage — it takes just a few minutes to set up and take down.



PHOTOS BY JEFF MARION



From top: Girls with a co-ed Venture Crew of high school students — led by Jeff Marion — learn the correct way to hang a hammock during a backpacking trip past McAfee Knob in Virginia; Venture Crew youth enjoy their hammocks after successfully setting up.



So what's not to like? My chief complaint is that sleeping suspended in the air maximizes convective heat loss — you sleep cold in a hammock. Fortunately, there are several solutions to this problem. I initially tried sleeping pads in the hammock but it's hard to position and keep yourself on them throughout the night. When you wake up cold you instantly know what parts of your body are off the pad. A more successful option was my purchase of a sleeping bag that replaces all bottom insulation with a sleeve that you slide a mummy-shaped sleeping pad into. On sub-30-degree nights and in treeless areas I set up my hammock on the ground with suspension ropes tied to trees or trekking poles to elevate the canopy and netting. Your hammock becomes a tent and you sleep warmer on the ground. Another option for cold-weather hammocking is to use an insulated underquilt suspended beneath the hammock. For those interested in trying out hammock camping I suggest searching the internet to investigate the many different types and brands of hammock and methods for suspending them.



HAMMOCK BASICS

KEEP SUSPENSION LINES LOOSE — A WEIGHTED HANG ANGLE OF 30 DEGREES IS BEST



ATTACH WEBBING TO TREES ABOUT SIX FEET ABOVE THE GROUND, ADJUSTING THEM UP OR DOWN IN SLOPING TERRAIN SO THAT A LINE STRETCHED BETWEEN THEM IS NEARLY LEVEL

AVOID TRAMPLING VEGETATION

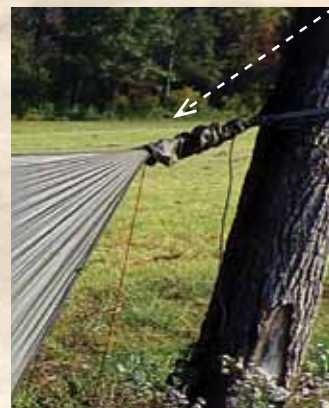
A RAINFLY PROVIDES SHELTER FROM THE ELEMENTS

USE ONLY WEBBING “TREE-SAVER” STRAPS (a minimum of 1" or wider)

CHOOSE TREES 6" IN DIAMETER OR LARGER, WITH DURABLE, HARD BARK WITH LITTLE TO NO LICHEN OR MOSS COVER — 12 TO 15 FEET APART (never attach to, or near, dead trees or overhanging dead limbs, or set up inside A.T. shelters)



PHOTOS BY JEFF MARION



SNAKESKIN COVERS SLIDE OVER THE HAMMOCK FOR EASY SET-UP AND STORAGE

HAMMOCK CAMPING LEAVE NO TRACE PRACTICES

The use of hammocks on the A.T. has clearly grown substantially in recent years. I view this as a positive trend from the perspective of minimizing camping impacts, though even more impact can be avoided if hammock users learn and apply some simple low-impact practices. As author of the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics book, *Leave No Trace in the Outdoors*, I've been experimenting for years with alternative low-impact hammock camping practices. I've concluded that the single most important item of gear in my pack that helps me “leave no trace” on my A.T. visits is my hammock.

Hammocks allow you to avoid many of the impacts and constraints associated with camping on the ground. First, hammocks allow camping across a much wider range of locations, including those with sloping and uneven terrain. Flat terrain is often limited to stream and lake shorelines in the mountains, locations that are more sensitive to camping impacts and vulnerable to campsite expansion and proliferation. Second, unlike tent, tarp, and bivy users, there is no need to remove rocks, woody debris, plants or organic materials from the site, or to alter surface water flows by ditching. Finally, sleeping on the ground involves crushing underlying vegetation and compacting soils, impacts that are avoided by hammock camping.

It's nearly always possible to find hammock camping spots where you can avoid trampling vegetation. Along the A.T. these are generally on existing campsites or in dense forests over leaf litter with little to no herbs or mosses underfoot. You'll need two trees (6 inches in diameter or larger) about 12 to 15

feet apart with no obstructing saplings or shrubs. Never attach to, or near, dead trees or overhanging dead limbs, or set up inside A.T. shelters (which are not designed for side loads). Trees with durable, hard bark and little to no lichen or moss cover are best.

Use only webbing “tree-saver” straps (a minimum of one inch — but wider is better) to suspend your hammock as these increase surface area and reduce the harmful forces ap-

plied to trees. Ropes and narrow webbing cut into tree bark, leaving ugly indentations that may also harm the outer cambium layer that produces all the new cells in the trunk. It's critical to leave your hammock

A hiker relaxes in his hammock on the A.T. in Georgia. Photo courtesy Eagles Nest Outfitters



PRISTINE SITE / BEST PRACTICES

- Consider stopping at a shelter or campsite with a nearby water source to cook and eat your dinner. Then fill up with water and hike at least 15 minutes down the Trail before searching for a place to camp.
- As you hike, look for an area with dense tree cover and few shrubs, saplings, herbs, mosses, or lichen. Walk off-Trail more than 200 feet to find a spot with no prior evidence of camping, preferably in sloping or uneven terrain that hikers are unlikely to see, find, or reuse.
- If you need to cook dinner then also look for an adjacent area with exposed rock for a durable kitchen site away from your hammock. If you must cook on leaf litter then move flammable leaves away from your stove and return them after you're done.
- Never build a campfire when pristine site camping. When moving about, avoid stepping on plants and don't shift branches or logs.
- Scatter branches and leaves on any disturbed areas before departing; someone walking past this spot after you depart should see no evidence of your camping.

suspension lines a bit loose — a weighted hang angle of 30 degrees is best. Pulling the lines tight dramatically increases shear force on your hammock and suspension lines and damaging pressures on trees. I generally attach the webbing to trees at about five to six feet above the ground, adjusting them up or down in sloping terrain so that a line stretched between them is nearly level.

Whenever possible, camp within the barren core portions of well-used campsites; always select the least desirable tenting spots, such as rocky areas or uneven, sloping terrain. I've heard A.T. hikers complain about hammock campers setting up over the “best tent spots.” If there is no space, or the trees are poorly positioned, find and use another campsite. Don't set up in adjacent offsite areas as this could expand the campsite. Campsite proliferation and expansion are two significant forms of camping impact that hammock campers should always strive to avoid. Prevent late-night visits by bears and other animals by not cooking near your hammock. Store your food, trash, and “smellables” by hanging them in a tree or placing them in a bear canister or food storage locker.

Hammocks also greatly facilitate what I call dispersed “pristine site” camping, also known as stealth camping. This does *not* mean illegal camping; apply this form of camping *only* when legal and you are willing to apply low impact practices. The prime objective of this form of camping is to *select only pristine spots that will not be re-used by others and to leave them in pristine condition*. This is the form of camping that I have been experimenting with on my section hikes for the last dozen years.



As hammock camping becomes more popular on the A.T., it's a trend that could help reduce crowding and resource impact at our shelters and existing campsites. However, it could also result in the creation of new campsites, the expansion of existing sites, or cause conflicts with other campers. Education will be key in determining the actual outcomes and A.T. Leave No Trace practices could be updated to include guidance for low-impact hammock camping and strengthen our communications with hammock users. 📌



AS THE G.M. OF EAGLES NEST OUTFITTERS (ENO) — HOW OFTEN DO YOU GET A CHANCE TO HAMMOCK IN THE OUTDOORS WHILE HIKING, CAMPING, ETC.? Unfortunately, with a growing company like ENO, I am unable to get out as much as I'd like to. I strive to go hiking/backpacking at least one night a month during the spring, summer, and fall.

HOW MUCH HIKING AND HAMMOCK CAMPING HAVE YOU DONE ON THE A.T.? I have hiked and hammocked primarily in Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Time off is often a limiting factor so my wife and I usually stay closer to home. Fortunately for us, the closest A.T. trailhead is only 35 minutes away.

IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BENEFITS OF HAMMOCKING (AS OPPOSED TO TENT, SHELTER, OR OPEN-AIR SLEEPING BAG CAMPING)? Benefits of hammocking include a deeper, more restorative sleep. I find myself sleeping fewer hours while hammocking and waking up more refreshed when compared to sleeping on the ground. I enjoy the ease of my hammock system as well as the number of potential campsites compared to tent camping. Hammock camping is very low impact and once mastered, it's easier to leave no trace of ever being there.

WHAT DREW YOU TO BECOME INVOLVED WITH CORPORATE SUPPORT OF THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY (ATC)? ENO consists of many like-minded individuals who

enjoy and respect the outdoors. We take pride in helping others discover and enjoy all that nature has to offer. I was fortunate enough to thru-hike the A.T. and wanted to give back to this community. For many of our users, our products act as a catalyst, a gateway to adventure and a connection to the natural world. In many ways, the Appalachian Trail acts as this same catalyst. [Its] accessibility to so many Americans is a blessing. But with this comes challenges of funding, overuse, and management. The ENO ATC DoubleNest hammock was created in order to help users enjoy the A.T., as well as raise awareness and support of this treasured national trail.

HOW DO ENO'S CONTRIBUTIONS BENEFIT THE ATC/A.T. AND WHAT PLANS DO YOU HAVE TO CONTINUE THAT PARTNERSHIP IN THE FUTURE? ENO's contributions help raise awareness and support of the A.T. Many of our retailers have been great supporters of this program and help to garner support and awareness of not just the ATC but the Pacific Crest Trail Association and Continental Divide Trail Association, too.

WHAT IS THE STORY BEHIND THE ENO ATC DOUBLENEST HAMMOCK? Coming from an outdoor retail background, I always felt that as a brand, the ATC had unlimited potential. It just made sense to form a partnership between two organizations that shared the same passions: getting people outside and protecting our resources. 📌

Eagles Nest Outfitters has been a generous Corporate Partner of the ATC for six years and counting.

PHOTO COURTESY EAGLES NEST OUTFITTERS



The ENO ATC DoubleNest hammock was created in order to help users enjoy the A.T. — 10 percent of sales are donated to the ATC. Available at the Ultimate A.T. Store: atctrailstore.org



PHOTO BY DAN INNAMORATO

Damascus, Virginia May 13 – 16

DON'T MISS THE FUN! Highlights include a hiker parade, educational programs, guest speakers, free gear repair, music, food, and more. Stop by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy booth in the town park to enter to win prizes.

For more information visit: www.traildays.us

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¹See cardholder benefits for details. ²Visa's Zero Liability Policy covers U.S. issued cards only and does not apply to certain commercial card transactions or any transactions not processed by Visa. You must notify your financial institution immediately of any unauthorized use. For specific restrictions, limitations and other details, please consult your issuer.

TRAILHEAD

★ ATC DIRT ★



Soldiers from the U.S. Army's 5th Ranger Training Battalion carry heavy lumber along the A.T. to help improve the camping area at Hawk Mountain in Georgia — more than 1,000 volunteer hours have already been logged on this project.



VOLUNTEERS

14 STATE CHALLENGE: Sign Me Up!

Lyn Widmyer

My job as a volunteer at the Appalachian Trail Visitors Center is to greet people. I have enjoyed meeting NOBOs, SOBOs, section hikers, day hikers and lots of folks who simply want to know how to get to Harpers Ferry (via the Appalachian Trail, of course).

While I have only hiked the four-plus miles of the A.T. in my home state of West Virginia, I am dazzled by those who have tackled the entire Trail. My first day at the Visitors Center, a woman arrived and announced she had just completed the A.T. "How long did it take you?" I asked in amazement. "Thirty years," she replied. Her husband had taken her to different trail heads and picked her up days or weeks later for three decades. Someone taking 30 years to complete the Trail is just as awe inspiring to me as those who press through and do it all at once.

I may never hike all 2,200 miles of the A.T. but I still want in some way to be part of the Trail hiking community. The Appalachian Trail 14 State Challenge gives me that chance. Visitors to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Visitors Center who are pursuing the goal of hiking a piece of the A.T. in all 14 states inspired the staff to promote this simple concept. Participants are challenged to visit Trail locations in each of the 14 states traversed by the A.T. For those who complete the challenge, a certificate can be downloaded from the ATC's website and a patch will soon be available. Laurie Potteiger, the ATC's information services manager, says the program encourages people of all ages and abilities to explore the beauty of the Trail "in small bites." "If you have the Appalachian Trail on your bucket list, but don't have the time (or perhaps desire) to haul a pack up and down remote mountain trails, no problem," explains Laurie.

What I have learned from talking to hikers is that a very special community exists among those tackling the Trail. Numerous hikers speak of their adventures as the thrill of a lifetime, the most positive experience ever, and a chance to meet wonderful people. I actually get misty-eyed sometimes reading heart-felt comments on 2,000-miler applications. We all have a chance to visit and experience some of the A.T.'s most iconic places though — and you don't need to spend much money or purchase the latest gear to do so. The concept behind the 14 State Challenge is to visit sections of the A.T. in whatever capacity works for you — whether it's a day hike during a family vacation or a small outdoor jaunt while on a business trip.

All that's required is that you touch a white blaze in each of the Trail's 14 states. Although many areas of the A.T. are remote, virtually every Trail state has locations where you can conveniently access and enjoy the Trail. It could be in a state or national park, an A.T. Community or nearby town, or at a famous landmark. A few locations are even wheelchair-accessible. Spectacular vistas await sometimes just a few feet from the parking lot. The ATC's website suggests a destination and short hike for every state, but you can choose your own.

My favorite duties at the Visitor Center include photographing thru-hikers, handing them packages from home, hearing their stories, and logging in 2,000-miler applications. I will never join their ranks. But thanks to the 14 State Challenge, I will partake in the miracle of the Appalachian Trail and feel part of the Trail community.

For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/14statechallenge

ARMY RANGERS JOIN THE EFFORT

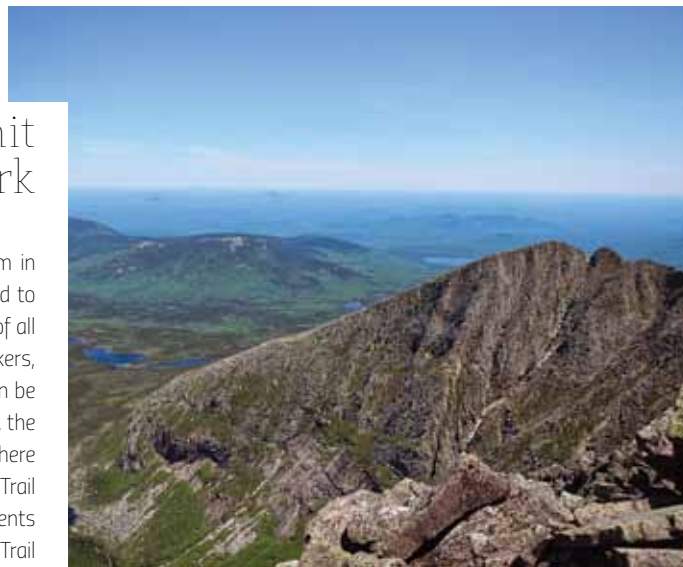
This past February, 32 Army Rangers from the U.S. Army's 5th Ranger Training Battalion at Camp Frank D. Merrill and 10 members from the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club (GATC) gathered for a full day of volunteer work. The Rangers carried heavy beams along the A.T. mountainside to help build new sustainable tent pads at Hawk Mountain campground. As a popular first stop along the Trail for thousands of hikers a year in Georgia's Chattahoochee National Forest, this beloved area has been increasingly strained as use continues to grow. In a collaborative effort to find solutions to the growing problem, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, GATC, and the Forest Service developed the Hawk Mountain sustainability plan. Additional partners, including the Appalachian Long Distance Hikers Association and university student volunteers, are helping to realize the project on the ground. This spring, the new camping area, privy, and drinking water source at Hawk Mountain will be put to the test as thousands of hikers — many beginning their long journeys as northbound thru-hikers — alight at Springer Mountain. If successful, the project will serve as a model for sustainable use along the entire A.T. as the Forest Service and partners continue working toward the right balance of current use and future Trail preservation.

PHOTO COURTESY USFS/ BECKY BRUCE-VAUGHTERS

A.T. Long-Distance Hiker Permit Now Required in Baxter State Park

Baxter State Park has implemented a new A.T. Long Distance Hiker Permit System in 2016 to improve its management of A.T. long-distance hikers in the years ahead and to be equitable to all park visitors. A free A.T. long-distance hiker permit will be required of all northbound long-distance hikers who enter the park in 2016 (this includes section-hikers, and flip-flop hikers); southbound hikers are not required to have a permit. Permits can be obtained in person at Baxter State Park Headquarters, Katahdin Stream Campground, the Appalachian Trail Lodge in Millinocket, and from the A.T. Steward at Abol Bridge — there will be no limit to the number of permit cards available in 2016. ¶ “The Appalachian Trail Conservancy understands that the increasing number of long-distance A.T. hikers presents a management challenge for Baxter State Park officials,” explains the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) executive director Ron Tipton. “We will continue to work cooperatively with Baxter State Park by informing and educating long-distance hikers about proper hiker behavior.” Processes to limit daily access to Katahdin trails, to manage visitor experience in the park’s wilderness, and to protect the park’s alpine zone have been in place for 30 years for park visitors from Maine and elsewhere, with the exception of A.T. long-distance hikers. Long-distance hiking on the Trail has steadily increased during the past two decades and, in Baxter State Park alone, A.T. hiker numbers have nearly doubled in the last 10 years. ¶ To assist in the growing number of A.T. users and to help educate long-distance hikers about the new permit system the park is implementing in 2016, the ATC will have two seasonal staff people in Monson, Maine beginning this summer. “A presence in Monson demonstrates the ATC’s commitment to a comprehensive and proactive stewardship plan that will further our ability to work with our partners in protecting a high-quality hiking experience,” says Tipton. “Baxter State Park is an important ATC partner, and we will continue to cooperate closely given our mutual interest in providing A.T. hikers in the park with a meaningful Trail experience while preserving the outstanding wilderness values of Baxter. The ATC has existed for more than 90 years to preserve and manage the 2,190-mile Appalachian Trail, and with a growing interest in this world-famous Trail, the mission of the ATC remains just as relevant and important today.”

For more information visit: baxterstateparkauthority.com



BAXTER STATE PARK PHOTO BY ELLEN GASS



2016 GARLIC MUSTARD CHALLENGE

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) is hosting a second annual Garlic Mustard Challenge. The ATC and A.T. maintaining clubs will host a series of spring and summer projects to help volunteers identify and remove invasive garlic mustard plants in the A.T. corridor. The 2016 Trail-wide goal will be 3,100 pounds; representing 100 pounds for each of the 31 Volunteer Trail Clubs. With your help, we know we can reach this ambitious goal.

To learn more or to schedule your own garlic mustard pull contact:
garlicmustardchallenge@appalachiantrail.org

#AT2016



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2015 2,000-miler Erick Dahl, White Mountains, New Hampshire

STEWARDSHIP 101

By Beth Critton

So, what is the Stewardship Council? My favorite definition of “stewardship” is that it means “the responsible overseeing and protection of something considered worth caring for and preserving.” As Stewardship Council chair, I often share my belief that there is no greater privilege than serving as a steward of the Appalachian Trail. The council’s role in Trail stewardship has shaped its composition and structure and gives focus to its work.

Within the Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) governance structure, the council is a committee of the Board of Directors and its chair is a member of the board. The council presently includes, among others, associate professors with expertise in parks, forest resources, recreation and tourism management; a retired international development expert; a former park ranger, several attorneys, including a community advocate for clean water; a retired chemical engineer, the managing editor of an outdoor magazine, the director of conservation and stewardship for a state land trust, and an award-winning math teacher with a gift for youth outreach. Many are former A.T. thru- or section-hikers or are active in local Trail maintaining clubs.

The council oversees policy development and programs related to the A.T. and surrounding lands and takes a lead role in volunteer development and training, outreach and education, and mitigating threats to the Trail. It also serves as an interface among the Trail maintaining clubs, regional partnership committees, agency partners, ATC staff, and the Board of Directors. On a select number of proposed new policies the council looks to the board for final consideration and approval.

The substance of its work is shaped by requests from ATC staff, maintaining clubs, agency partners, and by the initiative of council members themselves. It also oversees and advises on policy matters. For example, identifying the need for a policy on drones. The council often has the opportunity to weigh in on partner or board initiatives. Several council members had the privilege of helping to develop the National Park Service’s Foundation Document for the Trail.

In fall 2014, the council temporarily suspended its existing committee structure to align its work with the ATC’s five-year Strategic Plan goals. As a result, two committees renamed and redefined themselves. The Community Outreach Committee became the Youth and Diversity Committee; the Regional Partnership Committee became the Partner Communications and Resource Committee. All committees are dedicated to helping the ATC attain specific Strategic Plan objectives, resulting in the council’s involvement in issues ranging from updating Trail MOUs to launching the Next Generation Advisory Council.

Current initiatives include planning the August 2016 Volunteer Leadership Meeting, developing a policy related to hazard trees and a club advisory regarding animal-deterrent food storage systems, bringing ATC lands into compliance with National Land Trust standards, addressing external threats from gas pipelines, and developing a case statement for the enhanced integration of A.T. Communities into the cooperative management system.

Being a member of the Stewardship Council requires commitment, but rewards its members with a wonderful opportunity to give back to the Trail. ⬆

For more information visit: appalachiantrail.org/leadership

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FOLLOW THRU

IT'S BEEN JUST OVER A YEAR SINCE the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) began implementation of its five-year Strategic Plan. When the Board of Directors approved the plan, we made it clear that it would remain a living, breathing document and would require updates as circumstances dictated. The foundation of the plan — the ATC's mission, vision, values and goals — remains intact, which is a testament to the board, ATC staff, and partners who helped to craft it. Some of the individual strategies that were developed to achieve the Strategic Plan goals have evolved in the past year, specifically as they relate to the Effective Stewardship Goal and hiker use issues along the Trail. This is good news as it shows that the plan is working, as it should, to provide the ATC and its partners with a roadmap for managing the business of the ATC and the Trail.



HERE'S WHAT WE'VE BEEN UP TO. FOR UPDATES VISIT APPALACHIANTRAIL.ORG/STRATEGICPLAN



EFFECTIVE STEWARDSHIP

BE THE LEADING VOICE WITH OUR PARTNERS IN MANAGING THE A.T. AND ITS SURROUNDING LANDSCAPES.

ATC field staff hiked a large portion of the Trail with GPS units to inventory more than half the A.T.'s assets — they then created a database with that information that will be used to improve the treadway, bridges, overnight sites, and parking areas. The inventory will be completed in 2016.

After partnering with the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics in 2014 to become a Leave No Trace Master Educator course provider, the ATC offered two Master Educator courses in 2015. More than 50 individuals are now positioned to help train others in the skills and ethics of Leave No Trace. Three Master Educator courses and several Trainer courses are planned for 2016.

The ATC published a "Group Management Manual" — in partnership with several New England Trail clubs — to be used as a resource by Trail maintaining clubs for managing large, organized groups on the A.T.

We also launched a voluntary thru-hiker registration system — a tool that helps prospective thru-hikers share their start dates with other thru-hikers and plan their itinerary in order to avoid the social and ecological impacts of overcrowding on the Trail. Through registration, hikers can enhance their A.T. experience and enable the ATC to better manage the A.T. — without additional regulations.



PROACTIVE PROTECTION

ADVOCATE FOR BROADER PROTECTION OF THE TRAIL'S NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

In 2015, the ATC scaled up landscape conservation for the Trail. We hired a director of landscape conservation and hosted the first annual A.T. Landscape Conservation workshop — nearly 70 participants attended, representing large and small conservation organizations, and federal and state agencies.

The ATC and its partners are working on important conservation issues across the landscape from Georgia to Maine. We are creating leverage by building a bigger umbrella for our partners to operate under, fostering more collaboration and funding to secure lands and work with communities surrounding the Trail. This network — working under the A.T. Landscape Initiative — will be supported by the ATC to expand successful landscape protection in priority areas. One excellent example of this is the recent formation of partnerships in three watersheds in the Delaware River Basin in eastern Pennsylvania with support from the William Penn Foundation.

Left: The Roan Highlands area is a prime example of exemplary landscape protection surrounding the A.T. Photo by Travis Bordley Right: Participants take part in a Leave No Trace Master Educator course Photo by Kathryn Herndon



BROADER RELEVANCY

ENGAGE AND SUSTAIN A NETWORK OF PARTNERS THAT REINFORCES OUR GOALS FOR THE A.T. AND OUR PROGRAMS.

After much assessment in 2015 — including focus groups with educators and staff, interviews with the ATC's leadership, surveys, and listening sessions with Trail clubs — the ATC is poised to move forward with its Broader Relevancy action plan that will create opportunities for stronger connections with diverse audiences and develop and form key local, regional, and national partnerships for recruiting a younger and more diverse population to the A.T. and its management and protection.

We launched the Next Generation Advisory Council, which gives 15 young, diverse leaders a voice in our cooperative management system. We also created skill training and professional development programs such as the new Conservation Leadership Corps, a career pathway for young adults (18 to 25) providing a 10-week paid internship and participation in our seasonal programs.

This summer, we will conduct listening sessions with urban audiences to help us conduct a wellness platform to convey the mental and physical benefits the Trail provides through new, innovative ways.



ENGAGED PARTNERS

Through continued training opportunities, consistent communication, and the support of the initiatives of our 31 Trail maintaining clubs' work with A.T. Communities and new audiences, we strive to ensure the strong beating heart and vibrant soul of our volunteer corps. The ATC hopes this year will bring renewals of Memorandum of Understanding agreements between Trail clubs and the ATC to re-affirm their shared commitment to the A.T. We have also launched webinars for volunteers to share best practices. We plan to host a volunteer leadership meeting and continue to invigorate A.T. Community involvement Trail-wide.



STRENGTHENED CAPACITY

CONTINUE TO BUILD A FINANCIALLY STRONG FOUNDATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY TO ENDURE LONG-TERM SUCCESS.

In order to provide advice on programs and expand fundraising potential, we created the ATC Advisory Circle in 2015, which consists of a diverse group of individuals who provide expertise, leadership, and outreach on behalf of the organization in order to fulfill the ATC's mission. More than \$300,000 was added to the David N. Startzell Stewardship Fund, (the ATC's endowment) as well as almost \$300,000 to the ATC Lands Fund, which is designated for land transactions and improvements.

We also defined and filled fundraising positions for both an ATC foundations officer and corporate/events officer to help position the ATC to exceed revenue expectations in 2015 and in the coming years.

OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE

A five-year capital plan was created, which will help the ATC plan for its future facility and equipment needs as our organization and programs grow. We also began work on the ATC's five-year Information Technologies plan, which is vital in order to understand what tools are necessary for staff to achieve its five-year Strategic Plan goals.

We learned from staff what our overall internal communication needs were — for example: setting some basic procedures for daily operations. As a result, one of our goals in 2016 is to put together standard operating procedures manual.

Moving forward this year, we will focus our attention on a new financial system that will more effectively allow the ATC to budget for and track programs as outlined in our Strategic Plan. Our current financial system had not been updated since 2005. As we've grown, our needs and the needs of our partners have changed, therefore, a system that allows us to effectively report to all of our stakeholders in an efficient way is a major priority. ⬆

the NEXT 100

By Matthew Graves

THIS YEAR MARKS THE 100TH

anniversary of the creation of the National Park Service (NPS) — the federal bureau designed to manage a unified system of national parks within the Department of Interior. In 1916, there were only 35 national parks and monuments. Places like Yellowstone, Yosemite, and Grand Canyon. One hundred years later, there are 409 diverse park units, including the Appalachian National Scenic Trail, protecting 84-million acres of public land. Regardless of title — park, monument, battlefield, historical park, lakeshore and seashore, river and trail, parkway, and more — the mission is the same: “to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wildlife therein and to provide for the enjoyment of the same in such manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.” These words from the NPS “Organic Act” signed by President Woodrow Wilson on August 25, 1916 resonate just as soundly today as they did 100 years ago.

While the words remain same, the current and future challenges associated with achieving this mission far eclipse what anyone could have imagined when the Park Service was created. Climate change and air quality issues, habitat fragmentation and invasive species, over-use or irrelevant, changing public interests, and other national priorities — the list of challenges goes on. While Congress can create new national parks, today we know that to preserve parks in perpetuity, it takes an informed and caring public. Although the Appalachian Trail has a long association

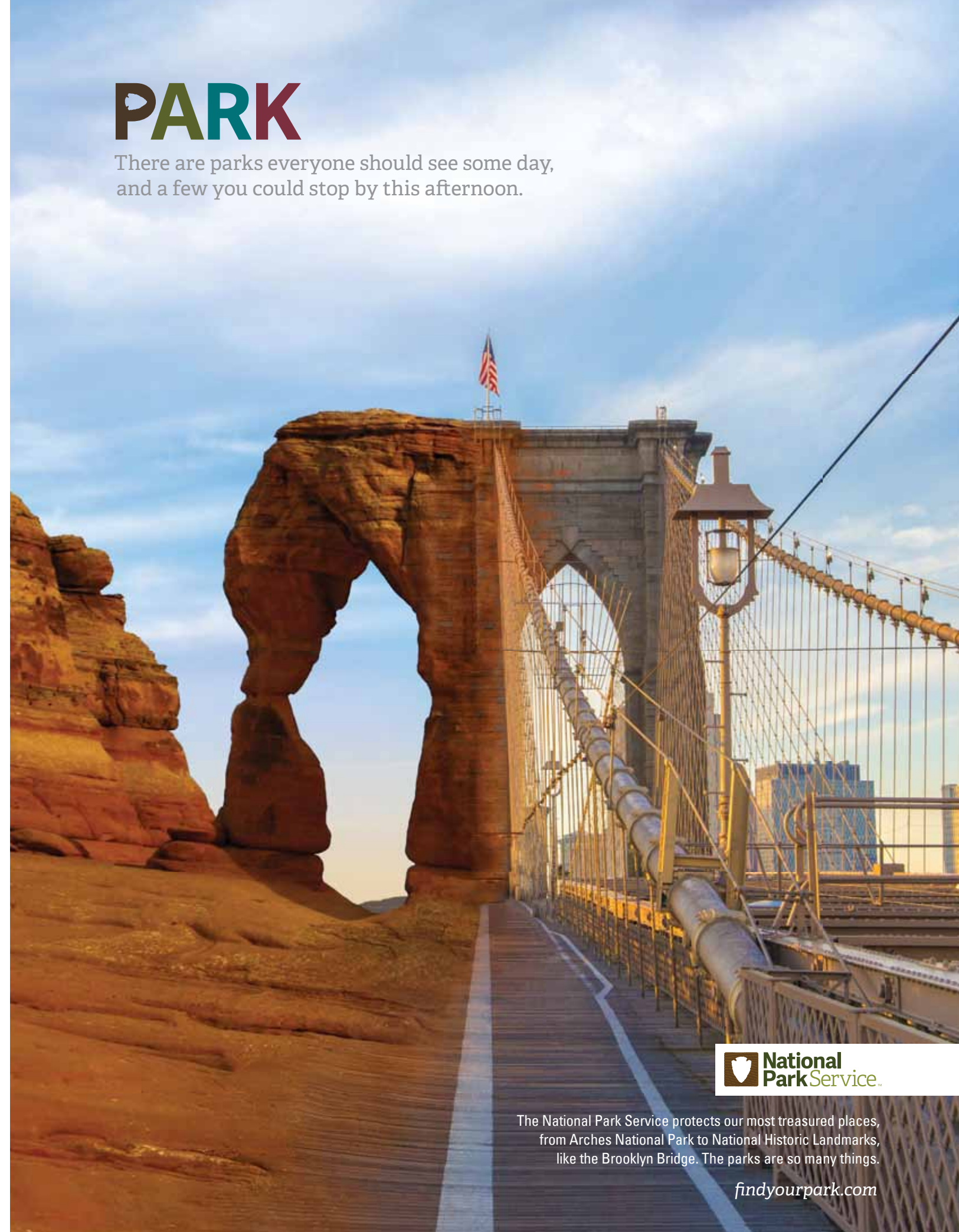
with the National Park Service, it is only a middle-aged member of the National Park family — becoming a National Scenic Trail in 1968. However, the Trail’s management is a model for addressing today’s challenges due to its Cooperative Management System — one of the nation’s oldest and most successful examples of a public-private conservation partnership. In fact, more and more public land managers are embracing the benefits of “cooperative management” as a way to address the challenges of today’s world by actively engaging volunteers, non-profits, communities, new audiences, school systems and universities, and even corporations in the active stewardship of our national treasures.

One of the primary goals for the National Park Service Centennial is to connect with, and create, the next generation of park visitors, supporters, and advocates. Our hope is to inspire a rapidly diversifying population to develop their own individual connections with our natural, cultural, and recreational public lands, so they find meaning and personal relevance in these places. A colleague once shared that “the public must *care about* parks before they will be willing to *care for* parks.” The Trail’s history demonstrates that the Trail clubs, the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, NPS, U.S. Forest Service, and land management partners can maintain and protect the footpath of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. The future will judge us by whether we can accomplish the bigger challenges of protecting the iconic landscapes and environments surrounding the Trail, along with meaningful experiences for those using the Trail. It might seem a daunting task to protect both the physical Trail and the environment through which it passes, but if the past teaches us anything, it’s that there is no limit to what an informed, caring, and dedicated public can accomplish. The next 100 years of preserving our national heritage looks bright. ↗

Matt Graves is the program manager for Interpretation, Education, and Outreach with the NPS Appalachian National Scenic Trail Park Office.

PARK

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and a few you could stop by this afternoon.



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✦ Jessica "Code Red" Alley –
Mahoosuc Notch, Maine
by Peter Donati

Spring 2016
A.T. Journeys

28

THIS LISTING INCLUDES THOSE WHO HAVE REPORTED HIKE COMPLETIONS

of the entire Trail to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) since the last listing in *A.T. Journeys* a year ago. Of this year's listing, 916 are from 2015; the rest are from previous years (there is no time limit on reporting a hike completion) — with 1,051 hikes of the entire Trail reported.

Alternative thru-hiking styles are up — a record number of "flip-flop" thru-hikers reported completing their hikes in 2015. Flip-flopers are a mix of those intentionally starting at a location mid-Trail, and those who "flip" after starting a traditional northbound thru-hike. Harpers Ferry was the most popular location for those starting mid-Trail, but flip-flopers who completed the Trail in 2015 started in more than a dozen different locations. As hikers are choosing innovative approaches to planning their traverse of the A.T., it can be challenging for the ATC to compile statistics on them, but we know their numbers are growing and they are helping to spread out use.

2015

2000

MILERS

CONGRATULATIONS!

✦ LIFE MEMBERS / ✦ CURRENT MEMBERS

We would like to express our appreciation for those 2,000-milers who have chosen to support the Appalachian Trail as Appalachian Trail Conservancy members.

Spring 2016
A.T. Journeys

29

611

northbound thru-hikers finished their hikes — with fewer reporting completions since last year

72

“flip-flop,” who started in dozens of different locations, successfully completed their thru-hikes



158

hikers completed the Trail piece by piece over the years via section-hikes

75

southbound hikers started in the north and headed south to complete the Trail

916

hikers reported completing the Trail in 2015

1,927

thru-hikers registered their start dates in 2015. Roughly half of those who completed the A.T. this year participated in the voluntary thru-hiker registration

Voluntary Thru-Hiker Registration

Voluntary registration was initiated in 2015 as a mechanism to allow thru-hikers themselves to spread out their start dates on their own accord. The ATC views voluntary registration as a way to enhance your A.T. experience and better manage this natural resource — without additional regulations. As various categories of thru-hikers registered

their start dates last year, frequently updated graphs were posted on the ATC’s website showing how many people had registered to start each day. This allowed those with flexibility to choose a day when fewer hikers were beginning their treks. appalachiantrail.org/thruhikeregistration



① Catherine Hopkins & Sojourner
 ② Fedelina & Marvin Gross ③ Cheri Noren & Bonnie Hedberg Karet
 ④ Judi & John Melanson ⑤ Ian & George Brenckle



* Russell Aulds / #1
 * Philip Ayliff / Time Machine
 Paul Bach / Phyzzy
 Nate Bachman / Pick-Me-Up
 * Michael Baggot / Just Mike
 Benjamin K. Ball / Still Smokin
 * Summerset Banks / PomPom
 * Bryan Banning / Wolverine
 * Andrew Baranak / Lightning
 Frank Barbon / Peaches
 Michael B. Barclift / XL
 Lori Barkley / Rawhide, R2, 50Tree
 Kelsey Barklund / Poppins
 Bekah Barnett / Micro
 Frank Barnett / Joker
 Josh Barrett / JB
 * Drew Bartlett / Forrest Gump
 Kasey Bartnick / Cheeks
 * Debra Barton / Fireball
 Ryland Bates / Frost
 * Bert Bausmith / Pa Bert
 * Jeffery A. Beacham / Stache
 Stevie Beam /
 Robert A. Beaumont / Butter Bar
 Joni Beauvais / Beast Bison
 Clayton Beckett / Chef
 Susan Beckett / Redback
 * Michael L. Bennett / Chief
 * Tina Bennett / Toad
 * Donald Benson / Oatmeal
 * Tim Berens / Fireball
 * Steve Berger / Walking Man
 Eva Berndt / Red Titan



2016

- * Robyn Crispe / DejaThru
- * Jessica Somos / Frisbee
- Scott Webster / MaGee

2015

- * Andy Aarons / Rock
- * Lorene Aarons / Roll
- * Beth Eden Abel / Spirit
- Melissa Adamo / Free Range Chicken
- Christopher Richard Adams / Yahoo
- * J. Brady Adcock / Castaway
- * Nancy Adrian / Greyhound
- Patrick Alcott / Meatstick
- * Allan Aldrich / Jack Rabbit
- * Jessica Alexander / Almost Fun
- * Abdullah Alhag / Wandar
- * Joseph Aliotto / Snowta
- * Dennis W. Allen / Bowie
- * Joseph D. Allen / Mojo
- Shanna Allen / Keychain
- * Jarrett B. Alley / Karaoke the Bard
- * Jessica Alley / Code Red
- * Kyle Altman / Shortbus
- * Melody Alvarez / Chameleon
- * Gene Anderson / PaPaBear
- Heather Anderson / Anish
- * Timothy L. Anderson / Last Minute
- Charlie Andrews / Sam Wise
- Robert D. Angst Jr. / Roadside
- * Dominick P. Aponte / All the Way
- * Madeline Arena / CindeRella
- * Jim Arzigian / Catnapper
- Charlotte Atti / Booterman & Boomerang

- Derek Henry Bestor / Supernova Thundercat
- * Joseph Biasi / Icarus
- * Eric Bickford / Night Terror
- Colleen Binkley / Toasty
- Jackson Birrell / Pumpkin Butt
- Richard Birss / Dusty
- * Jessica Elise Bitter / Rapunzel
- * Zane Blakey / Relish
- Steven J. Blessinger / Beestinger
- Johanna Blevins / Bud Light
- Colin R. Blye / Bee Sting
- * C. David Bockman / the White Wolf
- * Daniel Boeker / Bud
- * Andrew Boggess / Wayah
- * Lee E. Bohner / Loner Bohner
- Jim Bond / Mado
- * Susan Bond / 007
- Molly Borgstrom / Green Bay
- John T. Borst II / Magician
- * Tim Boulton / Ghost Chili
- * Carol Bovell / Rabbit
- * David Bowen / Guitarzan
- Ben Bowles / Ginger T
- * Steve Bowling / Mongoose
- * Eddie Boyd / Oilcan
- * Erik Boydston / Paperclip
- * Jeff Boyer / Barbarosa
- * John Thomas Brady / Biscuit
- Michael Bray / Papa Oats
- * Danielle Breakell / Red Panda
- * Ryley Breiddal / Monk
- * Michael Brekke / Wrecker
- * George Brenckle / Dos Equis
- Ian Brenckle / OSHA
- Johnny Brennan / Castaway
- * Thomas D. Brewer / Sliderule
- Lindsay Brisko / OUTRO
- Allison Broadwater / Mountain Mama
- * Josh Brockman / CHEWY
- Erik Brooks / fiddlehead
- * Sean W. Brooks / Gold Star
- Elisa Brown / Yoga Taco
- * Jennifer Brown / Pebbles
- * Katherine Brown / Wilderness
- * Laura Brown / Mayo
- * Steven Brown / Brown
- Colin Brownlee / Little Debbie
- * Anda Bruinsma / Unhinged
- * Marilyn Brundage / Blue Blaze
- * Nicholas Bruno / Poboy
- Matthew Buckley / Big Deal
- Jessica Buice / Dirty Peanut
- * James Buker / Sparky
- Kristin Bullett
- Thomas Buononato / Red Swagger
- * Warren Burbury / BULL
- * Edward A. Burkert / Easy-Go
- * Terence Burns / Silverfoot
- David Logan Burnum / Goodpeople
- Graham Burry / Led Steppelin
- Jimmy Butler / Bear Attack
- Bob Button / Zipper
- * Maggie Byelick / Solo
- * Joseph Andrew Byran / Tor-Tis
- Céleste Cabot / Gravity
- Dan Campagna / Steady
- Jade Campagna /
- * James Cape / Auto Draft
- * Robert Capo / Rush
- * Kent Caraway / Fox
- * Abigail Carl / Pink Panther

- * Elizabeth Carliss / Laugh Track
- * Ryan Carpenter / Green Tortuga
- Jimmy Carr / Wandering 1
- Jordan Carr / Whiskers
- * Gretchen Carroll / Ukalady
- * Dan Caruso / Uncle D
- Aimée Casey / Iron Maiden
- * Kevin Casey / Mr. Peanut Butter
- Nicholas Cellini / MisMatch
- * Evan Cestari / Too
- * Hannah Chamberlain / Songbird
- Joseph Chapman / Bruin
- * Kyle Chapman / Shivers
- * Adrian Charkowski / Quiet Diet
- Rachel Cheatham / Glacier-Swiss



① Beth Abel & Marcia Roland
 ② Allyson Hester



- * Yen Lin Chen / Glamper
- Logan Christiansen / Squabbler
- * Anthony Clark / Semi
- * Glen A. Clark / QUAHOG
- Sarah Clark / Flick
- * Michael David Clasing / Freestyle
- Austin Clay / Boris
- * Alec Clement / Die Free
- * Elliott Cleveland / Blaze
- * John Cleveland / Salmon
- William Coffey / Firestarter
- * Erez Cohen / Stretch
- * Jorge Salvador Machuca Cohen / Naptime
- * P.J. Coleman / Young Blood

- * Edna Neal Collins / Andante
- Heather Collins / Hard Headed
- Joseph Collins / Runs with Beer
- * Nick Collins / Yeti
- * William Taylor Collins / Swift
- Linda Comeau / Little Biscuit
- John K. Conant / Pain Wizard
- Daniel Condon / Sticks
- * Michael A. Conn / Drifter
- * Ernest Elisha Cook / Hallow
- * Ellen C. Cooper / Mt. Laurel aka Mosshead
- * Anthony Corazza / Snakefoot
- Timothy Corey / Lay-Z-Boy
- * Pamela Cornell / Corky

- Roger Cortes / Uncle Rog
- Marc Cossette / Freedom Fry
- * Cameron Cotner / Cameron
- Matthew Coward / McGuyver
- * Geoffrey H. Cowart / Captain Handy
- Julian David Flashman Cranberg / Treebeard
- * Jordan Crawford / Fireball
- Kimberly Crisman / Moxie
- Travis Crouch / Odiferous
- Phillip Curry / Princess
- * Paul Curtin / Magnum
- Erik M. Dahl / Goodfoot
- * Jane Dailey / Calamity
- Hannah Darst / Little Engine
- * Andrew M. Davidson / Phantom

- ✦ Charles W. Davidson / Chase
- ✦ Gwendolyn Davies / Frizzle
- ✦ Ben Davis / HomeFry
- ✦ Josle Daw / Sweet Blood
- ✦ James M. Day II
- ✦ Chloë de Camara / Vulture
- ✦ Jeff De Troye / Flash
- ✦ Kaitlyn DeBiasse / Soggy Dirt
- ✦ Lee Deckelman / Sonny
- ✦ Shalin Desai / Shay
- ✦ Linda Deyling / Bluebird
- ✦ Andrea Deyling-Hobbs / Hakuna Matata
- ✦ Johathan Didner
- ✦ Nhan Diep / Hands N Mouth
- ✦ Tyler Dingfelder / Hot Wheels
- ✦ Clifford Worth Dixon / Clean Cut
- ✦ Nicholas Dobbs / MacDaddy
- ✦ Hannah Dobson / Rabbit
- ✦ Jessica Dodds / Myles
- ✦ Eric Dolak / Chef
- ✦ Gary Dollman / Wookiee
- ✦ Thomas Dondeneau / Little Brother
- ✦ Jerry Doran / Jerry
- ✦ Sara Douma / Stretch
- ✦ André Douzant / Selfie
- ✦ Terry Dowdry / Soda
- ✦ Kirk Dresden, Jr. / ToSol
- ✦ Nicole Dresher / Falling Angel
- ✦ Russell Dresher / Night Terror
- ✦ Wesley Dry / Raiden
- ✦ Sam Ducharme / Sam I Am
- ✦ Ron Dumoff / Old Sherpa
- ✦ Michael W. Dunavent / Wildcat
- ✦ Elena Dunckel / Smiles
- ✦ Douglas E. Dvorak / Just Doug
- ✦ Elysha M. Dyer / Yard Sale
- ✦ Sean Eaton / Bigfoot
- ✦ Paul C. Ebert / Good Enough
- ✦ Kellie Eldridge / Smoke Signal
- ✦ Mohamed Elerman / Flame
- ✦ Nicole Eller / Blue Kazoo
- ✦ Melissa S. Emmerson / Swampy
- ✦ Michael L. Episcopo / Drifter
- ✦ Kayla Epperhart / Happy Baby
- ✦ Anthony V. Esposito / Rolling Thunder
- ✦ Keelin Esposito / Brightside
- ✦ Joe Estes / Pilgrim
- ✦ Sol Adrian Everett / Vanguard
- ✦ Gordon Ewald / Euchre
- ✦ Gregory Eynon / Chuckles
- ✦ Jack Farley / Squire
- ✦ Woody Farmer / Dancing Bear
- ✦ Adrian R. Farrall / Pace
- ✦ Monica A. Farrall / Mac
- ✦ Joseph Farrand / Yoyo
- ✦ William Michael Farrell / Oyster
- ✦ James Fath / Don vino
- ✦ André Aubin Faubert / Double Down
- ✦ Michael Faulkner / Better Than Expected
- ✦ Michael Fermin / Rhino
- ✦ Jodie Fernald / Haulin' Oats
- ✦ Jake Filiisky / Butcher
- ✦ Norm Findley / T.P.
- ✦ Sylvia Fine / Siva
- ✦ Matthew Fioramonti / Mirage
- ✦ Willis Fireball / Fireball SoBo
- ✦ Dominique Fischer / Take It Easy
- ✦ Bennett Fisher / Jolly
- ✦ Henry Fisher / Powerslide
- ✦ Katie Fleming / Yoda

- ✦ Marie Fogle / Dora the Explorer
- ✦ Chris Ford / Pacer
- ✦ Rebekah Ford / Dragon
- ✦ Andrew Forestell / Reptar
- ✦ Jan Forro / Good Kn1ght
- ✦ Billy Fournier / Tex
- ✦ Zachary Fox / PeaceDawg
- ✦ Anna Freedman-Peel / Honey Britches
- ✦ Patrick French / Dosu Kinuta
- ✦ Scott French / Hooti
- ✦ Dan Fritz / Cheese
- ✦ Marisa Fritz / Mak
- ✦ David Funkhouser / Funk
- ✦ Thomas Furey / Stately
- ✦ Paul John Fuzinski / Bronco
- ✦ Zachary Fyffe / Sweeteyes
- ✦ Brent Gaither / Super Glue
- ✦ Brion Gallagher / O
- ✦ Scott Gardner / Freebyrd
- ✦ William J. Garlinghouse / L. DOG
- ✦ Alex Garner / RED
- ✦ Heath Garner / Cruise Control

① Joe Farrand & Terry Hodge
② & ③ Kevin & Aimee Case



- ✦ Carolyn Garrity / Lil Bean
- ✦ Jeffrey Garstecki / Fly-By
- ✦ Bradley Gaspard / No Worries
- ✦ Kevin B. Gavin / Spartacus
- ✦ Kyle Gavin / Pigpen
- ✦ Christopher Gaye / Varsity
- ✦ Carrie Geiger / Mama Bear
- ✦ Chris Geiger / Farmer Chef
- ✦ Gabriella Geiger / Hiney
- ✦ Hudson Geiger / Moe
- ✦ Lucas Gentry
- ✦ Andrew George / General Burnside
- ✦ David Getchel / Lunchbox
- ✦ Allison Ghaman / Knock on Wood
- ✦ Justin Gibbs / Mushu
- ✦ John Gillespie / Dizzy
- ✦ Justin Gilpin / Yonder
- ✦ David Gilrein / Deadline
- ✦ Noah Ginsberg / Bluebeard
- ✦ Constantine Gletsos / Picador
- ✦ Joshua B. Glick / Lone Ranger
- ✦ Harrison R. Glicklich / Just Harry
- ✦ Jude Goch / Nobody
- ✦ Robert Gonnelli / Kodak
- ✦ Paul Goransson / TARman
- ✦ Elliot Gorr / Elliot
- ✦ Michael J. Goshey / Maxheap
- ✦ Emily R. Gosselin / Rocket
- ✦ William A. Gouveia, Jr. / Billy the Kid
- ✦ Danielle Granaroli / Janezilla
- ✦ Kevin E. Gratz / Silverback
- ✦ Jeff Green
- ✦ Marc Greenwald / SkyWatcher
- ✦ Arlene Gregoire / Eveready
- ✦ Fedelina Gross / Sunshine
- ✦ Marvin Gross / Mango
- ✦ McLane Grow / Die Hard
- ✦ Timo Grueneberg / U Haul
- ✦ Andreas Gruenhage / Andreas
- ✦ Gregg Gruschow / Fire Man
- ✦ Mariah Guay / Flame Thrower
- ✦ Aubrye Guggler / The Aristocrats
- ✦ Ian Guggler / Thomas O'Malley
- ✦ Hannah Guilford / Shine On
- ✦ Janto Gundlach / Open
- ✦ Alison Gutacker / Little Goat
- ✦ Matt Gutacker / Yellow Beard
- ✦ Rex Gutsue / Numbers
- ✦ Melanie Guzek / Rainbow
- ✦ Melissa Guziak / Moment
- ✦ Robert Leo Haase III / Heavyweight
- ✦ Martin Haendl / Arrow
- ✦ Penny Hainer / Outlier
- ✦ Kasey Hale / TANK
- ✦ Kevin B. Halsey / Bull
- ✦ Andrew Hambrick / Tigger
- ✦ Brent Hambrick / Simple Man
- ✦ Colette Hambrick / Chocolate
- ✦ Corban Hambrick / Mud Magnet
- ✦ Elizabeth Hambrick / Lollipop
- ✦ Luke Hambrick / Turbo
- ✦ Matthias Hambrick / Dash
- ✦ Sarah J. Hamilton / Waiting
- ✦ Andrew S. Hamm / Gordon Gekko
- ✦ Teri Hanavan / Hopper
- ✦ Geoff Hancock / Rookie
- ✦ Michelle Hand / Apple Cider
- ✦ Michael Handwerker / Hip
- ✦ Courtney Hans / The Countess Coco
- ✦ Winnie Hardy / Shadow of a good bear
- ✦ Melanie Harmon / Gamel

- ✦ Emily Harris / Lumi
- ✦ Ian Harrison / Skipper
- ✦ Collin C. Hart / Waylon Jennings of "The Highwaymen"
- ✦ Ian H Hart / Willie Nelson "The Highwaymen"
- ✦ Ryan O. Hart / Kris Kristofferson of "The Highwaymen"
- ✦ Jocelyn Haversat / Tric (Electric Lizard)
- ✦ Peggy Hawkins / Advil
- ✦ Erica Hayden / Thistle
- ✦ John Hayes / Gravel Boy
- ✦ Rachel Hecht / Duck!!!
- ✦ Hunter Heiney / Cambo
- ✦ Dennis S. Heller / Snowhead
- ✦ Jimmie Hellstrom / Hailstorm
- ✦ Michael Hemmerle / Samson-the-Bear
- ✦ John Hepp / Bengal John
- ✦ Emily Herman / Mooch
- ✦ Sarah Hersey / Pinecone
- ✦ Allyson B. Hester / Clarity
- ✦ Jacob Hewitt / Rocko
- ✦ John Hildebrand / Sycamore
- ✦ Jared Hill / Hot Pants
- ✦ Rita Hill
- ✦ Jeremy R. Hillner / Spongebob
- ✦ Kevin Hilsey / jikido
- ✦ Chris Hirsch / TARPMAN
- ✦ Terry Lynn Hodge, Jr. / Tweet
- ✦ Jevin Hoepfer / Orange Crush
- ✦ Brenda M. Holdener / Iron Lady
- ✦ John Hollis / Shark Bait
- ✦ Ryan Holody / Chewbacca
- ✦ Catherine C. Hopkins / Salix & Sojo
- ✦ Denise Horen / Nemo
- ✦ Susan Hornbuckle / Cashmere
- ✦ Mark R. Horne / 1Step
- ✦ Carol Horowitz / Penguin
- ✦ Shane Horvath / Tilt
- ✦ Paul E. Hosier / Seaoats
- ✦ Claude Houge / Pilgrim
- ✦ Ann Houghton / Mountain Ann
- ✦ Rachel Hoyt / Queen Bee
- ✦ Edward Hubbard / Ideas
- ✦ Oliver Hudgins / Roker
- ✦ Martin Huettl / McFly
- ✦ Richard Humphries / Buckle
- ✦ Colin Hutchison / Nazi Surfer
- ✦ Snow Zombie
- ✦ James Huth / Smasher
- ✦ Mary Ann Hyde / Little Engine That Could
- ✦ Emily Ingram / Voyageur
- ✦ Allison Irion / E-brake
- ✦ James Irvin / Twister
- ✦ Sami Ishac / Taco
- ✦ Dakota C. Jackson / Artichoke
- ✦ Kurtis Jackson / Hoot
- ✦ Tobias Jaeschke / Mr. Clean
- ✦ Jonathan Jeffery / NeeMor
- ✦ Mark Jeglinski / Jig
- ✦ Clayton Jernigan / Clay
- ✦ Andrew Jezewski / Big Easy
- ✦ Greg Johns / Just Greg
- ✦ Lester Johnson / Blue Toes
- ✦ Seth J. Johnson / Strech
- ✦ Skip Jonas / Strider
- ✦ Eric Jones / Yoohoo
- ✦ John Kaizar / Comrade
- ✦ Sarah Kaizar / Moon Unit
- ✦ Sean Kamp / P-Diddy
- ✦ Chris Karcz / Bloop, Bleep

- ✦ Bonnie Hedberg Karet / BonBon
- ✦ Molly Katzman / Tick Tock
- ✦ Daniel Kayser / Simple Sole
- ✦ Jeffrey L. Kayser / Hammertoe
- ✦ Ryan William Keeling / Pippin
- ✦ Blake Kehler / Kaleb
- ✦ Michael Keighley / Archangel
- ✦ Robert J. Kellner / IMBOB/Boomerang
- ✦ Birgit Kemper / Mother Nature
- ✦ Jonathan Kemper / Between
- ✦ Jason Kennamer / Rock Boat
- ✦ Tori Kent / Tortoise
- ✦ Stanley Ketchel / Slowski
- ✦ Deidre Kibbie / Pony Puncher
- ✦ Megan Kidston / Bearcat
- ✦ Kevin Kiernan / Possible
- ✦ Kerry Killebrew / Falcon
- ✦ John Hepp / Bengal John
- ✦ Elizabeth King / Blazer
- ✦ Matthew King / Pyro
- ✦ Samuel Kirschbaum / Karaoke
- ✦ Carey Kish / Beerman
- ✦ Jonathan Klassen / Big Brother
- ✦ Rance Kleiber, Sr. / EZ



- ✦ Richard Knight / French Press
- ✦ Jeremy Koch / Mud Socks #124
- ✦ Robert E. Koch / Tiger Bob
- ✦ Nikolaus Kolb / Klaus
- ✦ Daniel Koning / Smoke
- ✦ Kathleen Koning / Splash
- ✦ Melissa Kowalinski / Gypsy
- ✦ Tosha Kowalski / Skittles
- ✦ Hank Krakat / Horse
- ✦ Jae Kramisen / Scribbles
- ✦ Jared Krechko / Turbo
- ✦ Aaron Krevans / Hobbit(s)
- ✦ Robert Krieger / Rise
- ✦ Andrew J. Kruis / High Life
- ✦ Sarah Kruis / Wisconsin
- ✦ Emmi Laakso / Frozen Mac
- ✦ Justine LaFermère / Axon
- ✦ Patrick Lalonde / High-Five
- ✦ Rob Lamar / Wreck
- ✦ Brian Lambert / Slider
- ✦ Mark Land / Mouse
- ✦ Robert Landauer / Coyote
- ✦ David Alan Lane / Squarepeg

- ✦ Steven Lange / Sparrow
- ✦ David Lapham / Moxie
- ✦ Peter Foster Larsen / Thorffinn
- ✦ Lee V. Larson / Lifeguard
- ✦ Sarah Lasky / Twiggy Ninja
- ✦ Jan Latarius / Autobahn
- ✦ Thomas Lavin / Zephyr
- ✦ Mike Leach / Monk
- ✦ Dianne M. LeBlanc / Neon
- ✦ Andre Leuwen / Harvey Wallbanger
- ✦ William Leslie LeMieux / MASLOW
- ✦ Chim Lev / Road Runner
- ✦ Elizabeth Ann Lewis / Towanda
- ✦ James Lewis / GRIZLY1
- ✦ Kristen Lewis / Forever
- ✦ Tim Ligon / Whip
- ✦ Theodore Lindman / Go Hard
- ✦ Reiner Linke / Beetle
- ✦ Adam Lint / Hook
- ✦ Jeffery Lister / PA Trail Runner
- ✦ John P. Litherland / Piper
- ✦ Mackenzie Lloyd / Gangrene
- ✦ Barkley Logan / Blister Babe
- ✦ Kurt Lohide / Phantom

④ Debra Barton, Cindy Spangler & Melanie Harmon

- ✦ Rebecca Loo / Fuzzy Walks
- ✦ Adam Loyd / Adam
- ✦ Mary Lukaszewicz / Frostbite
- ✦ James Lunning / Attrition
- ✦ Reneé Lupien / Storybook
- ✦ Brian Luzader / Dr. Pickles
- ✦ Tina Luzader / Mockingbird
- ✦ Brendan Lyons / Lionheart
- ✦ John J. Lysaght, Jr. / Lean To
- ✦ Y Elaine Ma / T-Storm
- ✦ Heidi Madsen / Clark Kent
- ✦ Vincent Magnoux / Shrugs



- Jacob Maheu / *Mass*
- * Dan Maloy / *Gray Ghost*
- * Elise Mann / *Giggs*
- Paul Mann / *Walkie-Talkie*
- * Joseph Marchione / *Gimpy*
- * Jeffrey L. Marion / *Dr. LNT*
- * Spencer Marple / *Mismatch*
- * Christian Marshall / *Coin Toss*
- * Blake Martin / *BirdMan*
- Bob Martin / *Mr. Pink*
- Bryan D. Martin / *Tarzan*
- * Jeremy Martin / *J-Rock*
- * Timothy Martin / *Yoseki Skywalker*
- * Felix Martinez / *Funcle*
- * Ted Mason / *Happy*
- * Richard N. Massie / *Roub*
- * Wade H. Massie / *Bad Foot*
- Emma Mathis / *Laces*
- Raphael Matto / *Ice Cream*
- * Kimberly Maxwell / *Hollywood*
- * Trey Michael McBride / *Spooner*
- * Glenn B. McCombs / *Mac Gyver*
- Amy McConaughy / *Flynn*
- Jeff McConkey / *Hot Pants*
- * Peggy McConnell / *Mighty Mouse*
- Kevin McCormack / *Solo*
- * Bryan McCullough / *Binjali*
- * Jade McFadden
- * Michael McFadden / ?
- Richard McGarrell / *Moonwatcher*
- * Jennifer McGarvey / *Wonderland*
- Zach McGarvey / *Twilight Zone*
- * Kevin McGovern / *Coyote*
- Phillip Kirkwood McIntosh / *Lifeboy*
- Alexis McKenzie / *So Way*
- * Scott McKenzie / *Cookie Monster*
- Theodore McKenzie / *Thor*
- * Lara McLellan / *TR*
- * Al McLemore / *El Caminero*
- * James B. McMath III / *Boyd*
- * Devon McPhee / *Pockets*
- * Michael J. McPherson / *Houdini*
- Greg McWade / *Sir Iasis*



1 Andrea Deyling-Hobbs & Linda Deyling 2 Shalin Desai
3 Anna Zailik & Colton Pierce



- Tim McWade / *Riddler*
- * James Meehan / *Uphill*
- Eric Meeks / *Socrates*
- James A. Meeks / *Maverick*
- John Melanson / *J²*
- Judi Melanson / *J²*
- Luis Melodelgado / *Luis*
- Kasey Merritt / *South Paw*
- * Michael G. Merwin / *Half-life*
- * Candace Mickle / *Woodchuck*
- * Carlos Miera
- Arin Miller / *Click-Clack*
- Matt Miller / *Gator*
- * Steven D. Miller / *Night Candy*
- William J. Miller / *Hot Sauce*
- * Jessica Mills / *Dixie*
- * Norma Minar / *DROPKNIFE*
- Phillip Mizell / *Phil*
- William A. Modrall / *Diesel*
- Nathan Mogan / *Morning Wood*
- * Nicholas Mokhiber / *Birthday Bear*
- * Richard T. Monahan / *Shoe's*
- Cassandra A. Morecroft King / *Kamikaze*
- Lily Morgan / *Secret Squirrel*
- * Nathan Mori / *Dirty Nate*
- * Robert Morin / *Red Hot*
- Norman Morris / *Jingles*
- Dwayne L. Morrison / *Mountainman*
- Sarah Y. Morse / *Leap Frog*
- * William Moyer / *Fireball Sobo*
- Molly Moynihan / *Dirtface*
- * Gregory Muenchow / *Uhaul*
- * Connor Mullen / *Seeker*
- Ashley Mullins / *Stoat*
- Sharon Mullins / *K.y.a. Breeze*
- * Andrew Cobb Murphy / *The Law*
- * David C. Nauss / *Gasman*
- * John Nethercut / *Coffee John*
- * Levi Newbury / *Sir Scrabble*
- * A. Wayne Newton / *Fig*
- * Dennis R. Newton / *Trail Pilgrim*
- Andrew Neylon / *Bookworm*
- Quoc Nguyen / *Magic*
- Jack Nichols / *Cuatro*
- Laura Nolte / *Flair*
- Jon Noltie / *Redbeard*
- Emily Nuckols / *Sweet Roll*
- * Paul Nuckols / *Beyonce*
- Shelley Nuckols / *Frito*
- * Jeffrey Ochoa / *Sugar*
- * Douglas G. Odell / *Jedi*
- * Joseph O'Donnell / *Psych*
- * Dirk Oesterle / *Earth*
- * John-Christopher Ogden / *As They Say in Mexico*
- * Gregory Ohlsen / *Tex*
- Roger Oldaker / *S.S. Britman*
- * Catie Olszewski / *Paradox*
- * Chet Orton / *Chet*
- * William C. Oster III / *Squirrel*
- Matthew Otremba / *Jeopardy*
- * Tom Overbaugh / *Fudge Foot*
- * Sara Packin / *Sassafras*
- * Jessica Page / *Mama Long Legs*
- Josh Panchision / *CatDog*
- Eddie Paniccia / *Buster*
- Stacie Parker / *Trail Mom!*
- Paul K. Parmer III / *WALRUS*
- Christina Parson / *LOG*
- * Paige Pasquini / *fiddlehead*
- Michael Patota / *Robin Robinson*



- * Benjamin E. Pitts / *Prefontaine*
- * Michael Pleiss / *Tiger Mike*
- * Bret Popp / *Non Toxic*
- Alexandria Potocki / *Harken*
- * Robert G. Powell / *River Dawg*
- * Nicholas P. Power / *Spinoza*
- Carilyn Powers / *Mushroom*
- Zachary Prediger / *Weeble Wobble*
- * Barbara Prescott / *Hatorade*
- * Marc Putzi / *Ten Speed*
- Ingo Rabeler / *YOLO*
- * Seth Rackley / *A-Town*
- Katie Rapp / *Captain Planet*
- Martin Ratsch / *Breakless*
- * Ron Read / *The Sweaty Yeti*
- * Chris Reamer / *Cyclops/Cloppy*
- * Gregory M. Reck / *Rocketman*
- Stephanie Redick / *Banana Boat*
- * Hannah Redmon / *Zucchini*
- * Clifton Reeder / *Honeybuns*
- Nicholas Reichard / *CLICK*
- Alana Reid / *Muddy Duckling*
- Lindsey Reid / *Fire Bear*
- * Michelle Revoir / *PR Barbie*
- * Matthew Reynold / *Hazmatt*
- * Mary Rhyner / *Knitter*
- * Thomas Rhyner / *Weirman*
- * Gary U. Richard / *Giuseppe*
- * Gary U. Richard / *Giuseppe*
- James J. Richards / *Happy Warrior*
- Jesse Richards / *Slugbait*



- John Rogowski / *Amish*
- * Art Rohr / *Two Bad Dogs*
- Marcia Roland / *Smasher*
- David Ross / *Jumanji*
- Jesse Ross / *Cakebo\$\$*
- Kory Ross / *Cash*
- Jim Rossini / *Yankee*
- * Leigh Rothermel / *Starcunch*
- * Topi Ruohisto / *Finn*
- * Susan Rush / *WalkerBee*
- Gregory Ryan / *The Cheeseburglar*
- Paul Ryland / *Finn*
- * Bob Saari / *WANABE*
- * Alicia Salyers / *Murphy's Law*
- Amy Elizabeth Samp / *Chicago*
- Morgan Sander / *Steel Foot*
- Jonathan Sansoucy / *Peaceful Warrior*
- * James Sapcoe / *Gray Goat*
- * Peter W. Sauber / *Just Pete*
- * William J. Sauber / *Ironman Bill*
- * Angela Sauer / *Squirrel*
- Kelsey Sauer / *Spock*

- * Alfred Sauld / *Papa Al*
- * Natalie Sawin / *Pocahontas*
- David Sayers / *Mr. Clean*
- Jay Sayers / *Mountain Goat*
- * Julie Sayles / *Little Bear*
- Ariela Schear / *Willow*
- * Kathryn Schertz / *Doc Kate*
- Dan Schmidt / *Top Fuel*
- * Janet Schmidt / *Green Fire*
- * Curtis E. Schmitt / *Low Profile*
- * Katarina Schneider / *Kat*
- * Alan Schoen / *Chat Cat*
- * Andrew Schubauer / *Slingshot & The Hairy Missile*
- * Jason Schultz / *Scribe*

- 1 Eva Berndt 2 Liz Wojcicki, Emily Leonard, Kim Crisman & Stephanie Harvie
- Jeffrey F. Schutz / *Magnet*
- Madelena Scotto / *Moxa*
- * David Seamans / *Beowulf*
- Tessa Searle / *Lorax*
- Christina Seiler / *Luna*
- * Marcus Seitz / *Putt-Putt*
- * Sheila Seitz / *Tumble*
- * Kyungsuk Seo / *Solar Body*
- Kyle Settlemire / *Greywolf*
- Shaun E. Sexton / *NTN*
- Eric Shaw / *D.G. (Delayed Gratification)*
- Jordan Sherbet / *Fozzie*
- * Siobhan Sheridan / *Drop Bear*



- ✦ Scott Eugene Shipley / *Eternal Scout*
- ✦ Kyle Shirley / *Swahili*
- ✦ Matthew Shirley /
- ✦ Allison Page Short / *Timber*
- ✦ Walter Shroyer / *Treeartist*
- ✦ Daniel Shumac / *PaPa*
- ✦ Daniel Shumate / *Twister*
- ✦ Steve Silva / *Not Yet*
- ✦ Gregory M. Simmons / *Mufasa*
- ✦ Gaby Sippel / *Pinocchio*
- ✦ Scott Skrabal / *Jarhead*
- ✦ David Slaten / *ISO*
- ✦ Maggie Slepian / *Honey Badger*
- ✦ Adam Smith / *Headlights*
- ✦ David Smith / *Weedeater*
- ✦ Glenn P. Smith / *Sir*
- ✦ James Smith / *Plank*
- ✦ Jesse Smith / *Packman*
- ✦ Robert Smith / *Peter Pan*
- ✦ Spencer Smith / *Fairway*

- ✦ Theresa Smith / *Hummingbird*
- ✦ Liz Snyder / *Yellow Bird*
- ✦ Paul Soderberg / *WIRED*
- ✦ Joseph Solis / *Gandalf DA Brown*
- ✦ John Sommers /
- ✦ Jim Sowell / *Dirt Time*
- ✦ Cynthia Spangler / *Loon*
- ✦ Randal McDonald Speakman / *Teddy Bear*
- ✦ Edd Spencer / *Piece of Cake*
- ✦ Joel Spinney / *Lumberjack*
- ✦ Paul Spranklin / *Wind*
- ✦ Jeremy Stank / *Slim or Fatboy Slim*
- ✦ Van Staskus / *2G*
- ✦ Clinton Stauff / *Silent Force*
- ✦ John Stebbins / *Big Sky*
- ✦ Patti L. Stechschulte / *Beacon*
- ✦ Larry Stefanick / *itinerary*
- ✦ Jesse Stein / *Eclipse*
- ✦ Scott Steiner / *Old School*
- ✦ Tobias K. Stenberg / *WALL-EE*

- ✦ Andrew Stephens / *Sunshine*
- ✦ Joseph Stephenson / *Spike*
- ✦ Sarah Sterman / *Pacecar*
- ✦ Cynthia M. Stevens / *Hopscotch*
- ✦ Kerry Stewart / *Cyndi Loppers*
- ✦ Michael Stewart / *Stew*
- ✦ Pat Stith / *Lucky*
- ✦ Randal McDonald Speakman / *Deer Dog*
- ✦ Mark Stoltzfus / *Proudfoot*
- ✦ Kyle Stone / *K2*
- ✦ Zachary Starer Stor / *Bostrich*
- ✦ Kaitlyn Storey / *Tink*
- ✦ Will Stowe / *Gruffalo*
- ✦ Joseph Stradley / *Lorax!*
- ✦ Joseph Strain / *Fireball*
- ✦ Daniel Stratton / *Blue Collar*
- ✦ Theodore Strelecky / *Mantis*
- ✦ Horst Strunk / *Bigmountie*
- ✦ JoAnne G. Studer / *Food Truck*
- ✦ Mike Studt / *Scruffs*

✦ Jessica Somos & Scott Webster

- ✦ Penny Studt / *Woodstock*
- ✦ Michael Stuman / *Rain Check*
- ✦ Philip Svartoiien / *Wilson*
- ✦ Sarah Svendsen / *Blue*
- ✦ Chris Swanson / *Pegleg*
- ✦ Walter E. Swartz / *Machine*
- ✦ Bruce Sweet / *14*
- ✦ Thomas Swiader, Jr. / *Easy Strider*
- ✦ Buzz Sztukowski / *Caboose*
- ✦ Russ Tamashiro / *Hollywood*
- ✦ Lai Tang / *Rabbit*
- ✦ Todd Tapper / *Stumbles*
- ✦ Bryce Taylor / *Ox*
- ✦ Jonathon Teach / *Ambassador*

APPALACHIAN TRAIL CONSERVANCY



1 Marie Fogle 2 Robert Capo

- ✦ Christopher TeBeau / *Redlocks*
- ✦ Laura tenPas / *Tough Lil Biscuit*
- ✦ Todd tenPas / *Optomist*
- ✦ Marcia Terry / *Tumbler*
- ✦ Winston Terry / *Ratman*
- ✦ Zachary Thomas / *Jokes*
- ✦ J. Oliver Tilley / *Werewolf*
- ✦ Jody Tinsley / *Brightwings*
- ✦ Josh Tippett / *Cheesebeard*
- ✦ Quentin Tobey / *Q-Tip*
- ✦ Clint Tokash / *Burrban*
- ✦ Robert Torbert / *Wayfarer*
- ✦ Kevin Tostenson / *Hardcore*
- ✦ John M. Treacy / *Messy Garage*
- ✦ John K. Treiber / *John*
- ✦ Patty A. Troutman / *Bottle Cap*
- ✦ Richard C. Troutman / *Steppin Wolfe*
- ✦ R.J. Turcotte
- ✦ Daniel Turkington / *Wild Turkey*
- ✦ David Tyrrell / *Gator*
- ✦ Lynn Udick / *Two Bad Dogs*
- ✦ Patrick Alan Uecke, Jr. / *Cakes*
- ✦ Mike Unger / *AYCE*
- ✦ Stewart Urst / *Ascot*
- ✦ Phillip A. Valentine / *Right Click*
- ✦ Earl J. Vallery, Jr. / *Magnus*
- ✦ Jessica Vanderveldt / *Burl*
- ✦ Nicholas Vanderveldt / *Tree Beard*
- ✦ Lelia B. Vann / *Princess*
- ✦ Matthew Vaughan / *Ironman*
- ✦ Ryan Vaughan / *Ryan*
- ✦ Arthur Veilleux / *Wharton*
- ✦ Gleb Velikanov / *Drugstore*
- ✦ Michael T. Venus / *Ice Man*
- ✦ Stephen McClain Vilsack / *WYE KNOT*



- ✦ Eric von Gleich / *Rusty*
- ✦ Laura Wacker / *Granma LaLa*
- ✦ Nick Wagers / *Parks*
- ✦ Len Caspar Wagner / *Not Swedish*
- ✦ Aaron Walker / *Power House*
- ✦ Emily Walker / *Spice*
- ✦ Roger Walker / *Soft Pedal*
- ✦ Sarah Walker / *Mighty Mouse*
- ✦ Cooper Walter / *Milky Pancake*
- ✦ Luke Ward / *20 Names*
- ✦ Chance M. Ware / *Smokey Bear*
- ✦ Cory Washburn / *Body Glide*
- ✦ Su Wasseluk / *Clover*
- ✦ Graham William Watson / *BossAnova*
- ✦ Neal Watson / *Spoon*
- ✦ Nicholas Way / *Tunez*
- ✦ Crystal Weaver / *Caboose*
- ✦ Ryan Weaver / *Hummer*
- ✦ Tory Webb / *Heat Pack*
- ✦ Ben Weiserbs / *Rebel Yell*
- ✦ Marcus Reid Welker / *Kaleidoscope*
- ✦ Nadia Westenburg / *Furball*
- ✦ Mark N. Weyer / *Rebel Yell*
- ✦ Bernard Weymouth / *Lone Wolf*

- ✦ Thom Wham / *Obsolete*
- ✦ Patty Wheelbarger / *Yoda*
- ✦ Scott Whipples / *Ten Year*
- ✦ Brad Whitcomb / *Walnut*
- ✦ Joel A. Wier, III / *NAMI*
- ✦ Colin Wiesner / *Miles*
- ✦ Kevin Wietrzykowski / *Captain K*
- ✦ Dylan Wilcox / *Baby Blue*
- ✦ Russell Wilcox / *Desolation Row*
- ✦ Charlie Wilkinson / *Chuckles*
- ✦ Victoria Wilkinson / *Little Red*
- ✦ Reed Willard / *Detox*
- ✦ Jack Willett / *J.W. Just Walking*
- ✦ Christy Williams / *Fancy Pants*
- ✦ Erin Denny Williams / *Genesis*
- ✦ Jimi Williams / *jFuego!*
- ✦ Bobby Williamson / *Boomer*
- ✦ Michelle M. Wills / *Chell*
- ✦ Beth Wilson / *Skeeter*
- ✦ John L. Wilson / *MoFo (Moving Forward)*
- ✦ Donald N. Windsor / *SALTY DOG*
- ✦ John Wingren / *Southside*
- ✦ John Winter / *Young Gun*

- ✦ Tracie K. Winters / *South Pole*
- ✦ Trevor Wire / *Taco*
- ✦ Joseph Wodnik / *Big Sky*
- ✦ Liz Wojcicki / *MAPS*
- ✦ Kelly Wood / *Rain Drop*
- ✦ Renea T. Woodard / *Speck*
- ✦ Timothy Neal Woody / *Ropeburn*
- ✦ Jennifer D. Wright / *wanderwoman*
- ✦ Gillian Wyman / *Uncommon*
- ✦ Mark Yaeger / *Yaeger*
- ✦ Pat Yale / *Dish*
- ✦ Kylie Yang / *Sugar Magnolia*
- ✦ Howard Yates / *Trail Dog*
- ✦ Robin Yates / *Crumbs*
- ✦ Jeffrey C. Ylitalo / *Happy*
- ✦ Anna Zailik / *Woodstock*
- ✦ Benedict M. Zappone / *Slapshot*
- ✦ Danne Zerow / *Trudge*
- ✦ James Zeske / *Ole Skool*
- ✦ Mitchell Zinck / *Cookie Monster*
- ✦ Beth Zivitski / *Mother Nature*

2014

- ✦ Robert Anderson / *JEB*
- ✦ Brendan Avery / *Giggles*
- ✦ Zachary T. Barger / *Zachsquatch*
- ✦ Don Barnett / *Mushmouth*
- ✦ Caitlin Belcher / *Lopsang*
- ✦ Jonathan M. Bent / *Rikki Tikki Tavi*
- ✦ Kurt Bramel / *Fitty Shrimp*
- ✦ Anna Brand / *Scout*
- ✦ Belle Buterbaugh / *Yellow*
- ✦ James Buterbaugh / *Mellow*
- ✦ Michael Byrne / *Senator*
- ✦ Haley Choice / *Sunshine*
- ✦ Andrea M. Clement / *Dandelion*
- ✦ Brandon Chapman Cline / *Johnny Applesseed*
- ✦ Dan Codispoti / *Spot*
- ✦ Aerial Corey / *Goat Girl*
- ✦ David Dalger / *Merman*
- ✦ Daniel Evan Day / *Sloth*
- ✦ Eric Denemark / *Morning Joe*
- ✦ Katherine Denemark / *Roots*
- ✦ David Dodds / *Navigator*
- ✦ Jimi Driscoll / *Slim Jim*
- ✦ Derrick G. Earls / *Smooth D*
- ✦ Hunter Eggleston / *Rafiki*
- ✦ John Ellison / *Rarebreed*
- ✦ Jason Douglas Elwood / *Bamboo*
- ✦ Haley Evans / *Hawkeye*
- ✦ Michael J. Ewald / *Big Cheese*
- ✦ John D. Fleming / *Hey Everybody*
- ✦ Calvin Froedge / *Bear Bait*
- ✦ Ryan Gallagher / *The Fonz*
- ✦ Thomas Gary / *Zig*
- ✦ Bill Griffiths / *Woodman*
- ✦ Ralf Gunkel / *Catch Up*
- ✦ Riley Hall / *Smokey*
- ✦ Abriil Hammerstone / *Pilot*
- ✦ Andrea Hasselbacher / *Caboose*
- ✦ Thomas Hawkes / *Terrapin*
- ✦ Matthew Hickes / *M*
- ✦ Bill Hofman / *Zest*
- ✦ Jake Januszonis / *Roadrunner*
- ✦ Robert Jenrow / *Dad!*
- ✦ Cat Kelley / *Slim*
- ✦ Jenette Kloss / *Swish*
- ✦ Robert Langer / *milkmonsta*
- ✦ Ryan Legits / *Achilles*
- ✦ Carsten Lenz / *Ginko*



Maureen Lewis / *Little Bit*
 Benjamin Lutter / *Buckeye*
 James Manley / *jman*
 Connor Matheson / *Stringbean*
 Amalia Matthewson / *Toast*
 ✱ Julie McPherson / *Mama Bear*
 John Mudrey / *Johnny Walker*
 Trevor Oelrich / *Cannon*
 Jessica Pearson / *The Inventor*
 Connor J. Powell / *Lighthouse*
 ✱ Logan Vincent Pratt, Jr. / *Carolina Blue*
 Ray Reynoso / *Geared Up*
 Michael Roberts / *Butterscotch*
 Emily Rolando / *Reach*
 Robert W. Rose / *Hercules*

Jeff DeTroye

Aaron V. Ruecker / *Oregon*
 Kevin Shivers / *Late Start*
 ✱ Peter M. Smith / *No Big Deal*
 William Sullivan / *Stretch*
 Shawn Summers / *Upgrade*
 Julian Tapia / *Youngbeard*
 Megan L. Thompson / *Volde Meg*

✱ Tony Timberway / *Ruger*
 Jennifer L. Cicchetto Tuthill / *Seeks Chayah*
 Stephen Underkofler / *Cobble*
 Katherine Ann Vance / *Phoenix*
 Will Vonk / *Speedy G.*
 Alexander D. Wallace / *Sweet Siesta*
 Beau Welder / *Straight Up*
 Holly Welder / *Strogi Yogi*
 ✱ Brenan A. West / *Squanto*
 Gary White / *Walter White*
 Thomas Williams Jr / *Ranger*
 Zima Wood / *Zima*
 Russell Woron-Simons / *ShakesBear*
 ✱ Ethan Wright / *Berenstein Bear*
 ✱ Kyle Zalaski / *Frankenstein*
 Cassra Zareie / *Gonzo*

2013 - 1976

'13 Nicholas Burns / *MacGyver*
 '13 James Burns III / *Dr. Seuss*
 '13 Philip M. Cash Jr. / *Big Dog*
 '13 Alexandra Edwards / *Chicory*
 '13 Dan Ferguson / *Nomad*
 '13 Aaron Gillett / *Huckleberry*
 ✱ '13 Glenn Harman / *Oboe Hobo*
 '13 Jason Jones / *Red Rocket*
 '13 Krystal K. Miller / *Bear Snack*
 '13 Zachary Moeller /
 '13 Garrett Muro / *Garbear*
 '13 Maggie Petersen / *Copperhead*
 ✱ '12 Matthew J. Berlett / *Testament*
 '12 Matt Buchan / *2/3*
 '12 Jillienne Chavet / *Sketch*
 '12 Michael Ervin / *Animal*
 '12 Charles Gross / *Cheese*
 '12 Ryan Kippeny / *Bison*
 '12 Jonathan Lundy / *Grundlehammer*
 '12 William A. Martin / *YoYo*
 '12 Devin M. Rodgers / *Pan-American Birdman*
 '11 Dan Codispoti / *Spot*
 '11 Eugene M. Kancianic / *Mr. K.*
 '11 Nelly van de Mortel / *T*
 '11 William Van den Bogaard / *DD*
 '10 Gregory Stevenson / *One Life*
 '09 Bartholomew Lindberg / *Bambam*
 '09 Drew Mintz / *Muscles*
 '08 Colleen Contrisciane Lewis / *Forest Gimp*
 '08 Loduska Schook / *Butterfly Moon*
 '07 Patrick Dean / *Chilly*
 '04 Dan Codispoti / *Spot*
 '04 Jorma Hale / *Slimer*
 '03 Dan Codispoti / *Spot*
 ✱ '02 Julia Duren / *Jules*
 '01 Jeff T. Graves / *Graveytrain*
 ✱ '00 Bill Hofman / *Down Hill*
 1998 Dan Codispoti / *Spot*
 1993 Jason P. Lee / *Salamander*
 ✱ 1979 Jerry Doran / *Jerry*
 1979 Jim Schaffrick /
 1978 Brett O'Brien /
 1978 Gary Taylor / *Lem*
 1976 John J. Michel / *Trudge* ⬆



Building a stronger A.T. Community BRICK BY BRICK

The Community Pathway Project is an opportunity for community members and A.T. enthusiasts to pay tribute to the A.T. and the Trail Community of Damascus, Virginia.



Custom-engraved bricks are available for a \$100 donation to benefit the town of Damascus and the ATC. Bricks will be installed in the downtown Damascus sidewalk where the A.T. passes directly through.



REGISTER

YOUR THRU-HIKE, ENHANCE YOUR A.T. EXPERIENCE, AND HELP TO MANAGE AND PROTECT THE A.T.

REGISTRATION BENEFITS

- Help reduce crowded conditions
- Adjust your thru-hike start date or type of thru-hike to your advantage
- Receive information to help improve your A.T. hike
- Provide the ATC with important data and statistics

SPECIAL BONUSES

- Complimentary ATC membership and digital edition of *A.T. Journeys*
- ATC Member discount at the Ultimate Trail Store
- Commemorative limited-edition 2016 A.T. hangtag for your pack

2016 VOLUNTEER REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

For more information and to register visit:
appalachiantrail.org/thruhikeregistration



A classic summer evening on the bald at Big Yellow Mountain in the Roan Highlands. The Greater Roan Highlands Landscape is a roughly 65,000-acre project area that encompasses a mosaic of private and public lands and includes one of the richest collections of biodiversity on the planet.

A PLAYGROUND AND A LIVING GROUND

IN NOVEMBER 1974, ANN SATTERTHWAITE DELIVERED A paper that presented a bold vision for the Appalachian Trail to celebrate the Appalachian Trail Conference's 50th anniversary. In direct relationship to Benton MacKaye's original notion, she imagined a broad landscape surrounding the Trail that transcended traditional boundaries and land designations. Satterthwaite called it an Appalachian Trail Greenway and described a vast "greenbelt" that would not just protect the Trail corridor, but connect the footpath to the countryside and showcase the rich cultural, economic, and historic diversity of communities from Maine to Georgia.

PHOTO BY TRAVIS BORDLEY

By Jack Igelman

At the time, her study brought needed attention to the Trail and helped secure millions of dollars in funding for the A.T. during the Carter administration, according to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy's (ATC) director of conservation, Laura Belleville. But the momentum generated by Satterthwaite's lofty proposal faded as the ATC's push focused on completing protection of the last 200 miles of the Trail.

Still, the ATC's director of landscape conservation Dennis Shaffer says her work wasn't in vain, and is definitely an inspiration. "Ann's work was an important bridge to MacKaye's original vision that A.T. leaders saw and appreciated, but the timing of her conservation approach wasn't ripe yet," said Shaffer.

Now, more than four decades after her ambitious proposition, both Shaffer and Belleville believe that it's time to widen the scale of Trail protection.

In December of last year, Satterthwaite was among several dozen planners, Trail advocates, and land managers to discuss the launch of the A.T. Landscape Conservation Initiative — co-hosted by the ATC and the National Park Service — a collaborative effort of both private and public partners and agencies to conserve ecological, cultural, historic, and economic values across a wide-ranging area surrounding the A.T. The initiative coincides with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service whose "scaling up" strategy promotes large land conservation projects through public and private partnerships.

"When you think about the original, bold vision to create a trail through the Appalachian Mountains, protecting the footpath has been the primary effort," said Shaffer. "I feel like this is the next phase of protecting the Trail experience." And while it may be a new stage of protection, he said, it's rooted in the Trail's earliest beginnings: Benton MacKaye's vision to not just create a 2,000-mile-long trail, but a ribbon of green space connecting the communities around it.

While Shaffer has logged three decades of experience in land conservation, he's been captivated by the A.T.

"The reason so many people have powerful experiences on the A.T. is driven by more than just walking on the footpath ... memories can happen on your way to the Trail or in the community you stopped in for food or to spend the night."

experience since he first met a pair of Canadian thru-hikers at a store near his family's cottage in Pennsylvania when he was five years old. "I remember talking with them and being fascinated by how many pairs of shoes they'd gone through," he recalls. "The reason so many people have powerful experiences on the A.T. is driven by so much more than just walking on the footpath. The memories can happen on your way to the Trail or in the community you stopped in for food or to spend the night." Or perhaps explaining to an eager lad why you're on your fifth pair of boots.

And while the core of a hiker's journey may happen on the Trail where the tread meets the dirt, the Landscape Initiative is taking an expansive approach to protection that takes a bird's-eye view of the Trail and considers more than just the footpath. At the meeting, participants poured over maps of the Trail from Mount Katahdin to Springer Mountain marking and labeling current large-scale conservation initiatives and targeting high-priority or threatened sections of the Trail corridor. The goal, said Shaffer, was to look at the A.T. landscape as an entire system, rather than a corridor segmented by boundaries.

That's a perspective Satterthwaite, who was trained as a planner, proposed in the 1970s. Her view was inspired by English national parks that include living communities and land uses that are inextricably linked to the landscape. "When we think about parks in the U.S. we fence them off. I don't set boundaries myself — I see conservation in much broader terms," explains Satterthwaite. "The A.T. as a spine of the landscape is a wonderful given, but it doesn't express the extent of what can be done. The Trail has been protected, but how are we connecting the Trail to cities and showcasing the very diverse communities from Maine to Georgia? That should also be part of the experience."

Laura Belleville also participated in the gathering and said that a 30,000-foot view of the A.T. may help the ATC grasp less obvious opportunities for the Trail — as well as threats — that may surface in the future. "I think a large-scale landscape initiative helps you understand the big questions," she said. "We like to give areas names and draw lines around places and put them in a political framework, but when you're dealing with land conservation that's not necessarily how it plays out." Belleville admits that she's inclined to approach conservation from a biological standpoint — for instance, understanding how species migrate from one place to another — which means that how you draw boundaries can be dynamic.

Shaffer said that while some of the values that enhance the A.T. experience are tangible and can be defined on a map, such as a viewshed, some of the values that contribute to a hiker's experience are nebulous. And that's just it: a conservation landscape includes not just what you see, but what you sense and feel too. While completing protection for the Trail in



the years that followed the release of Satterthwaite's study was a tremendous achievement (the Trail itself is now 99 percent protected) protecting the Trail experience is perhaps as pressing as ever as iconic vistas, healthy ecosystems, and irreplaceable cultural, historic, and natural resources are threatened by development.

Among the discussions of the December meeting was crafting a vision to discuss best practices to tackle such an ambitious initiative. One of the conclusions was that a large landscape-scale approach dictates that the ATC and their partners reach out to potential stakeholders who aren't typically at the table. Shaffer said that the "tent has been populated by the usual cast of characters" who are typically recreation, conservation, and natural resource centric.

"Landscape level conservation is a huge opportunity to bring together a lot of different values. There are so many more opportunities that come to bear that really depend on building a broad and diverse coalition," said Shaffer. "We have an opportunity to broaden the tent." That future discussion may include local officials, planners, and businesses that may have a stake in the geography around the Trail.

While Belleville and Shaffer said the ATC has a proven track record of working collaboratively, perhaps no one at the December meeting has a better understanding of a broad approach to large scale landscape conservation

Lost Cove Creek — just a few miles from the A.T. in Avery County — is one of the great secrets in Pisgah National Forest and is as enticing as its sounds.

"Our job is to open a realm. This is something more than a geographical location — it is an environment."

Benton MacKaye



From top: The South Mountain region demonstrates the conservation challenge encountered in much of the Northeast — that of urban and suburban growth into farmland and forestland; In addition to protecting the scenic qualities of the region, the South Mountain partnership is also invested in protecting its cultural and historic context — here a group is led on a history hike of the area along the A.T. near Boiling Springs, Pennsylvania.



efforts than North Carolina author and Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy trustee Jay Leutze.

Leutze lives in a cabin built by his family on the flanks of Big Yellow Mountain, a 5,480-foot bald mountain that's within an easy stroll of the A.T. in Avery County, North Carolina. The views from the bald are breathtaking, but are also a window to a much larger area and inspired an ambitious effort to engage in one of the most substantial conservation collaborations in the southern Appalachians in recent decades. The Greater Roan Highlands Landscape is a roughly 65,000-acre project area that encompasses a mosaic of private and public land holdings that includes one of the richest collections of biodiversity on the planet. While roughly 20,000 acres is public land, the majority of the land within the landscape is not defined by traditional conservation boundaries. But because of the high recreational, ecological, and scenic value of the Roan Highlands the region has been on the radar of conservationists, including Leutze, for decades.

"Initially they [private landowners in the Roan] saw conservation organizations as outsiders," admits Leutze. "They saw us as a branch of government, which they saw as limiting vehicular access to the beloved mountain tops. But people were also becoming concerned about losing the way they've related to the landscape for generations. Local folks learned that real estate developers were a far more serious threat to what they treasured than was the U.S. Forest Service or the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy."

Shaffer emphasizes that the ATC is sensitive to including local landowners and doesn't want people to see this initiative as a land grab. "We want to work with willing partners," he said. "This is a coalition of network building people who want to work with us."

While projects such as the Greater Roan Highlands Landscape may be a model for future collaborations throughout the Trail corridor, Luetze said the project still has a long way to go. "People in Avery County [North

"Protecting the landscape is rooted in the Trail's earliest beginnings: Benton MacKaye's vision to not just create a 2,000-mile-long trail, but a ribbon of green space connecting the communities around it."

Carolina] and Carter County [Tennessee] still feel pretty remote from the Trail experience," he said. "I'd say the Roan is a place needing future engagement with the local communities. The [A.T. Landscape] Initiative will succeed where there can be a link to the population base."

One large-scale landscape project that's made significant headway is the South Mountain Partnership, a public-private collaborative effort that encompasses the A.T. in south-central Pennsylvania over a four-county region that includes a half-million acres. It's a large scale project that has blurred the lines between natural resource conservation and cultural preservation. In addition to protecting the scenic qualities of the region, the partnership is also invested in protecting the cultural and historic context of the region including the area's rich civil war history, it's bucolic farmland, and Native American history to name a few.

Katie Hess, the ATC's director of the South Mountain Partnership, said the project has thrived because of a grassroots approach to conservation instead of being driven from the top-down. In the decade since the project began, Hess said they've formed critical relationships with municipalities and county governments, a task not so easy in a state where people take great pride in local control and aren't always willing to work across administrative boundaries.

Each year, the project presents the Spirit of South Mountain Award to recognize individuals, projects, or organizations that make significant contributions to advancing a positive and sustainable future for the South Mountain landscape. In 2015, the prize was given to the Franklin County Commissioners and Greene Township Supervisors for their cooperation in conserving more than 1,100 acres of land. "Residents and local decision makers have to be on board," urges Hess. "If it's top-down there's less ownership. Large landscape projects must be driven by locals — that's the number one takeaway."

The ATC is also in the initial stages of forming partnerships in three watersheds in the Delaware River Basin in eastern Pennsylvania with a recent \$82,000 grant from the William Penn Foundation. The funds will be used to develop educational and interpretive materials to help establish a constituency of supporters in the region.

Hess acknowledges that developing meaningful relationships with potential partners takes time. "It's a long-range approach to conservation. You have to commit for the long haul," said Hess. That's something Satterthwaite and others within the A.T. community understand all too well. Nearly a century after, MacKaye's vision to create a giant wedge of wilderness connected to the cities of the East Coast is still a work in progress. "To have a wilderness experience that is so accessible to so many people is remarkable. This," said Satterthwaite, "is just the next chapter." ▲

ABOVE LEFT: PHOTO COURTESY OF SOUTH MOUNTAIN PARTNERSHIP / BELOW: PHOTO BY KELLY MCGINLEY

Scout's Honor



GREG WINCHESTER

GREG WINCHESTER HAS THE HEART and soul of a quintessential Boy Scout. And he puts that same Scout loyalty, helpfulness, and kindness into his work to protect the Appalachian Trail. He was 16 when he first set foot on the A.T. in North Carolina. “An Assistant Scoutmaster with our troop in Charlotte had taken his sons on the Trail and decided to lead all of us on a weekend outing [on Roan Mountain],” explains Greg. “I was awestruck by the beauty and the magnificence of God’s creation and from that point forward wanted to hike the Trail whenever I could.”

While attending the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Greg became a member of Alpha Phi Omega, the national service fraternity founded by the Boy Scouts of America. “Several members of the fraternity were in leadership roles with the UNC Outing Club and through them I joined the club and began to go on weekend outings,” he says. “Many of these were along the A.T. in North Carolina, Virginia, and Tennessee. “Today, I still stay in touch with some of the club leaders who also share a love for the Trail.”

LEADING THE ADVENTURE

From childhood to fatherhood, Boy Scout to Eagle Scout, Greg stayed close to Scouting and ended up leading his own three sons’ troop. “While serving as the Scoutmaster we hiked the Trail in Georgia and North Carolina many times and used it to help engage our youth with the Trail and backpacking,” he says. Today, Greg serves on the Board of Trustees of the Northeast Georgia Council of the Boy Scouts — an active and growing council with more than 30,000 members.

When Greg became a member of the

Appalachian Trail Conservancy’s (ATC) Board of Directors in 2013, he decided to do so because, as he says, “I saw the opportunity to serve with an organization where I could use many of my lifelong skills to help maintain and preserve a national treasure.” With a background in banking, finance, real estate, nonprofits, and conservation, the ATC board was a perfect fit. “Most of my business activities have been in major gateway cities in the U.S. and Europe, and I saw the ATC as a way to reconnect to conservation and the great outdoors.” His hard work, innovative ideas, and enthusiasm led to a quick advancement into his current role as the board’s vice president. When asked about that role, he says, “I feel like my greatest impact so far has been to participate in the development of the ATC’s Strategic Plan and to share some best practices I have learned from businesses and nonprofits with the board and ATC staff.” “He is a wonderful board member because he is always looking for opportunities to promote the Appalachian Trail experience and the important role of the ATC,” says the ATC’s executive director Ron Tipton. “Along with many great ideas, he brings much positive energy to board and com-

mittee meetings and in his constant advocacy for the Trail.”

HELPFULNESS

Since recently becoming a member of the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club, Greg has enjoyed learning about the club’s roots. “Georgia has a wonderful history of a strong club with great leaders, many of whom have also served in major leadership roles for the ATC,” he explains. Through his work with the club, he became part of creating a service project that would allow the Order of the Arrow Scouts (Scouting’s Honor Society) to work alongside the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and the Trail maintaining clubs on a day-long Trail maintenance project. “Last year was our pilot project in Georgia with the Georgia Appalachian Trail Club on Rocky Mountain, which was a wonderful success,” he says. “Our goal this year is to expand the service day into North Carolina, Tennessee, and southern Virginia. The long-term goal is to have an annual service day where the Scouts along the Eastern Seaboard can work on the Trail in all 14 states with the local A.T. clubs. “This will provide resources to the clubs, improve Trail maintenance, engage youth with the

A.T., and expose more adult leaders in the Boy Scouts to the Trail,” he explains. “It has been so encouraging to see the strong support from the leadership of both the Boy Scouts and the ATC for this project.” He says that, over time, the hope is to achieve the ATC’s goal of broader relevancy and to allow the Order of the Arrow to serve the country with a high-profile national service project.

“The Order of the Arrow Service project

is a great way to bring diversity, particularly youth diversity, to the Trail,” Greg explains. “Scouting has been and is becoming more engaged in servicing underprivileged youth and inner city youth; and, over time, I hope that [many more of these young people] will discover and enjoy the Trail.” He also hopes to see greater support for the ATC from urban areas like New York City where he has some strong business relationships. “Volunteering on the A.T. allows participants to connect with others who share a love for the outdoors and the Trail,” he says. “It provides exposure to many fellow citizens from a broad spectrum of backgrounds in the U.S., and it unites us toward a common good which serves our country and future generations.”

Greg finds refrain from stress and gusto for life through plenty of outdoor



Clockwise from left: Greg and his wife Jan on the A.T.; With two of his daughters, Rebecca-Joy and Mary-Elsye, and with one of his sons, Asa, during various jaunts on the Trail; Greg and members of the Boy Scouts, Order of the Arrow, Georgia A.T. Club, and ATC, during a pilot “day of service” project on the A.T. in Georgia last spring.



activities himself – at the forefront though is hiking. So far, he has hiked about 250 miles of various sections of the Trail in his home state of Georgia and in North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, New Jersey, and New York. “Hiking on the A.T. is reinvigorating for me; physically, mentally, and spiritually,” he says. “I have worked in many high pressure roles with financial institutions throughout my career, which included cleaning up large, troubled commercial

Greg believes that experiencing the A.T. gives one an appreciation for the vi-

ber is that, “we continue to responsibly fulfill our mission of protecting and maintaining the Appalachian Trail as the World’s premiere long-distance hiking trail. As the population of the U.S. grows and hiker participation increases, the ATC will have to address greater and greater challenges, threats, and opportunities.” And with the help of trustworthy, courteous, kind, cheerful, thrifty, and brave leaders like Greg, that vision will be a flourishing reality. 🌱

real estate loans and properties. I have found that the Trail has provided me oftentimes with the right antidote for dealing with stress and challenging situations.” His long-term goal is to section-hike the entire Trail. He and his business partners recently sold their company, which, he says, will allow him to spend even more time on the A.T. in the near future.

Greg’s family has an equally strong fondness of the outdoors — they enjoy hiking, biking, camping, swimming, and skiing. The entire Winchester clan, which includes six kids (three sons and three daughters), has hiked some portion of the A.T. with him. “My three sons are Eagle Scouts and have hiked the Trail throughout Georgia. They’ve also gone on long-distance treks out West and in other parts of the country,” he says. “My wife Jan, who loves the outdoors, has been very supportive of me in my various activities with the A.T. and ATC.”

Greg’s hope and vision as a board mem-



All the Way

By Pat Yale

Above: Pat and Carol with their husbands Neal and Kevin on the A.T. near Stratton Pond in Maine. Right: Pat with her husband Neal near Hog Pen Gap in Georgia last summer.

“PATSY! COME LOOK AT HOW FAR this trail goes; the sign says it goes the whole way to Maine!” My mom called out, waving me over to an informational sign at the park we were visiting on one of our many summer weekend trips. I wandered over and looked at the sign with her, my finger tracing the long dotted line that meandered up the map, crossing so many states. My 11-year-old imagination filled with visions of green mountains, rushing creeks, and the mystery of the woods. “I’m going to do it, Mom!” I said, excited. Of course, life gets in the way.

It was 1993, more than 30 years later, when my own daughter, then 21, showed

me an advertisement in *American Hiker* magazine. “This sounds pretty cool, Mom. It says, ‘you can help build a piece of the Appalachian Trail!’ We should do it!” Her excitement reminded me of that summer Saturday so many years before, so I signed us up to work with the Mid-Atlantic Trail Crew on the Jefferson Rock project in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. We had so much fun that we went on to work with the crew on the Peters Mountain Shelter in Pennsylvania. Over the next three years, both of my daughters and I worked in Vermont on the Long Trail Patrol and, in 1996, I asked my friend Carol to join in too.

Carol and I had been day-hiking sections of the A.T. in Pennsylvania starting in 1995, with friends from the Chester County Trail Club. After we had completed Pennsylvania, it seemed only natural that we would move on to New Jersey, New York, and Maryland. Then Connecticut and Massachusetts. Wait, what about Virginia? We’d better start heading south as well. So began the long weekends, then week-long trips, heading ever farther south (as well as north.)

During these years I continued to work with the Mid-Atlantic Crew on a



couple or the other might have missed. It began to look as though we might actually be able to complete this footpath from Georgia to Maine.

In 2010, we made our first trip to the A.T. in Maine. It wasn’t my first trip to

olina. There we met up with Carol and her husband, and we completed the Trail to Springer Mountain in Georgia together. This left us with only 82 miles in Maine — through the Bigelows and over Saddleback. My husband crisply pointed out that we had saved the hardest part for last. On Monday, July 20, we were the first to meet the ferry at the Kennebec River and begin our trek south. Nine hiking days (and a couple of zeros) later we all crossed the highway outside Rangeley together and got to the car just as a gray summer rain started to fall.

My mom passed away in 2013, so I couldn’t tell her that I finally finished the Trail that went “all the way to Maine.” But, I have a feeling she knows. 🌱

My 11-year-old imagination filled with visions of green mountains, rushing creeks, and the mystery of the woods. “I’m going to do it, Mom!” I said, excited.

variety of projects — tearing down a timber frame barn, building turn-piking, steps, and water bars, and working on Trail re-locations. In 2001, Carol once again joined me to work with the crew. There we met and worked with the men who are now our husbands.

With these new hiking partners we began completing more sections of the Trail. Of course Carol and I had to re-do some sections so our husbands could “catch up” to where we had hiked. We helped each other fill in sections that one

Maine — I had been many times as a kid, to visit my mom’s family all over the state. Starting at Jo-Mary Road, we hiked to and up Katahdin. That went well; let’s do the Mahoosuc Notch. Then we were hooked. We were back the next year to finish the 100-mile Wilderness. OK! At the same time we were also heading south each year getting closer to Springer. Talk about burning a candle at both ends.

Finally, 2015 was our year. In June, my husband and I hiked south through the Smokies and on to Franklin, North Car-

Pat Yale and her husband Neal Watson live near Michaux State Forest in Pennsylvania, and continue to work one or more weeks each year with ATC Trail crews. They have participated in numerous projects, including a 2008 relocation near Palmerton, working for the ATC Boundary Program in 2009, and 10 years working on the Bear Mountain, New York relocation. They are the maintainers for a section of the A.T. on Peters Mountain in Pennsylvania, and are the boundary monitors for the Susquehanna Appalachian Trail Club.

THANKS TO YOUR INCREDIBLE

generosity, this is a very exciting column to write. Because of your dedication and commitment to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), we exceeded our fundraising goal in 2015 by more than \$60,000. We set an ambitious goal of raising \$955,000 in the last quarter of the year and we raised more than \$1,000,000. Thank you!

As with most charities, the bulk of our donations come in the last quarter of the year, which can create some angst in August as we prepare the budget for the next year. However, you have always been faithful in your generosity and



dedication to our mission. As we embark on the second year of our Strategic Plan and it's very ambitious goals, your commitment is needed more than ever if we are going to achieve those goals.

In this issue we highlight two donors who exemplify their commitment every day to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

First, there is Lane Nakaji and his company, Eagle's Nest Outfitters (ENO).

Lane and ENO have been giving back for a long time but in recent years the effort has taken on a life of its own and the ENO ATC DoubleNest hammock has resulted in significant income stream for us (ENO donates 10 percent of sales to the ATC). It is fitting that in the same timeframe the name of Lane's company has become a verb as well as a noun. In some instances, to "ENO" is to replace your bed with a hammock. Lane, thanks for all you do to promote the Appalachian Trail Conservancy.

The other donor is Greg Winchester and his wife Jan. I first met Greg when he joined the Membership and Development Committee of the Board of Directors in 2011. Since then, Greg has jumped head first into leadership at the ATC. He joined the board in 2013 and became both vice chair of the board and chair of the Membership and Development Committee in 2015. Not only is he a dedicated volunteer of his time, expertise, and energy, he is constantly exploring new ways for the ATC to reach new audiences and advocating for the ATC wherever he is on the planet. It is my great pleasure to work with Greg and I am grateful for the leadership example he provides every day.

Lastly, the ATC is in the middle of a challenging change to our comfortable business processes. These changes, once implemented, will enable you to interact with us in a much more personal and substantial way. We hope that when all our data is converted and the new applications deployed you will find more reasons to stay connected to the ATC through our website, social media, mail, phone and, best of all, in person. 🏡

My very best,

Royce W. Gibson / Senior Director of Membership & Development

ENO hammocks are set up for hikers to try out at Damascus Trail Days

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2015 2,000-miler and ATC Board member Norman Findley completes his section hike in Maine

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HIKING PARTNERS

Hiking partner wanted. Male, 66, experienced hiker (A.T., BMT, PCT, etc.) **seeking partner(s) (male or female) to trek the Long Trail.** Contact: Tom Fuller (828) 349-4629 or tomfuller@joimail.com.

Female hiking companion. I'm **hiking a section between Pearisburg, Virginia and Loft Mountain Campground** (260 miles) September/October 2016. I'm 69 and finishing up the Trail. Are you interested in joining me for any segment or all of it? Contact: carlene@gmavt.net or (802)434-2533.

Senior A.T. hiker, 70, having hiked a little over 600 A.T. miles, **is looking for partners to backpack sections of the A.T. in 2016** and beyond — at average of 8 to 10 miles per day. Interested in southwest Virginia, North Carolina, and anywhere from Delaware through Massachusetts. Contact: fumiyo_tao@yahoo.com.

FOR SALE

Vasque Breeze 2.0 **men's hiking boots**, mismatched (right foot 13, left foot 14); \$80 brand new and never worn, recently purchased at REI for \$159. Contact: Bill (301) 346-2033.

Home for sale. At 3,200 feet and ½ acre lot 2,100 square foot 3/2, 2 story. Huge upper floor designed in Mission style with leaded glass doors and 1920s clearstory windows. Water music at front and rear 24 hours/365 days. Swim in the crystal clear Cane River just down the hill. Cold pure deep well. Cherry upper floors, oak downstairs. Located on a quiet county-maintained road surrounded by 3,000 acres of hiker-friendly forest with miles of trails and views. All appliances included and handmade Amish shaker style furniture available. Home of High Peaks hiking association. Five miles to Burnsville, North Carolina.

One hour to Roan Mountain, Sam's Gap, Hughes Gap, and Hot Springs. Also: 2 story garage and furnished apartment renting at \$500.00 a month. Asking \$175,000. For photos and more info contact Richard ('84 thru-hiker) at (828)-682-9099 or richarddm@earthlink.net.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

YOGA in Harpers Ferry, West Virginia. Experienced yoga teacher now offering classes in Harpers Ferry. Close attention to alignment, strength-building, flexibility, and efficient breathing. Learn simple movements to practice on the Trail. Just a short walk from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Visitors Center. Private and small group lessons. To schedule, contact Alexa at: (202) 763-2351 or visit: simplejoyfullyoga.com.

The **Appalachian Trail Conservancy is recruiting for several internship positions** this summer including: Public Relations, Social Media, Market Research, Visitor Services, and Land Steward. For more information or to apply visit: appalachiantrail.org/jobs.

Ticks are appearing earlier and in greater numbers than ever along the A.T., so take precautions to stay safe. Visit: appalachiantrail.org/health for tips on what you can do to **minimize your risk of tick-borne illness.**

Public Notices may be edited for clarity and length.



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Public Notices
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Hikers at Trail Days 2015 sign up for Hard Core volunteer work with Bob



PHOTO BY DAN INNAMORATO

AS I BEGIN MY 20TH YEAR operating Kincora Hiking Hostel, 22,000 hikers later, I would like to reflect a moment on how the Appalachian Trail has changed. Sure there is a lot more technology out there, but that is not what I want to focus on. The changes I am talking about are the hikers and the A.T. support groups.

The hikers are much more cosmopolitan, there are many more in the

40- to 60-year-old bracket and a higher percentage of woman and minorities are present. The thing to me that has changed the most is their support and support of the A.T. in general. Programs like Trail to Every Classroom, Trail Ambassador/Trail Communities, and the Next Generation Advisory Council, simply were non-existent. When the wife and I built Kincora Hiking Hostel, the next hostel to the north was 50 miles, to the south 143 miles. Today, there are 10 places to stay in that 143 miles south and four in the 50 miles north. Originally you were entirely on your own operating a hostel. Today organizations like the Appalachian Trail Long Distance Hiking Association (ALDHA) help low-cost/donation-only hiking hostels with ALDHA care packages (cleaning supplies, toilet paper, paper towels, etc.) and crews to help the hostel owners with day-to-day operations during the peak hiker season.

Although I hike all over the world, my primary interest has always been trail maintenance. After retiring from the U.S. Air Force, I began A.T. maintenance with the Green Mountain Club's Long Trail Patrol and spent the last 20 years, over 8,000 hours, working with Tennessee Eastman Hiking and Canoe Club (TEHCC). Through the years we have been fortunate to have been able to set up yearly Trail maintenance commitments with Appalachian State University, Wright State University, and Watauga College. Damascus Hard Core (based out of Damascus, Virginia during Trail Days) has been our major event introducing hikers to Trail maintenance. TEHCC has coordinated the event for 15 years with support from the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) and ALDHA. In those 15 years, Hard Core volunteers have contributed more than 20,000 hours of Trail maintenance on the A.T., building, re-locating, refurbishing, and repairing Trail as well as building bog bridges and a shelter. This year, Andrew Downs, the ATC's regional director in Virginia and Terry Williams, president of the Mount Rogers Appalachian Trail Club, will host the Hard Core effort and TEHCC will assist. Once again, the ATC and ALDHA will continue to provide man hours and financial support. Hard Core brings together current and past hikers of all ages from all over the world. Lasting friendships are formed during this two-day Trail maintenance effort. A number of the participants have become Trail stewards. They are the future of the Appalachian Trail.

It has been a great 20 years for both the A.T. and me. I hope I have 20 more years in me to see how the Trail has evolved. 🌱

Bob Peoples
LIVES IN HAMPTON, TENNESSEE



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📷 "8 PAWS" TAKES IN THE BEAUTY OF THE WHITE MOUNTAINS – PHOTO BY EMMA "LACES" MATHIS